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OPEN UP SASKATCHEWAN!

A Report on International Immigration and Inter-Provincial In-Migration Initiatives to Increase the Population of the Province of Saskatchewan

Prepared by
Pat Lorjé, MLA
Legislative Secretary

September 2003

Government of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan
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104-00736/

Acknowledgements

On April 22, 2003, Premier Lorne Calvert announced the creation of the position of Legislative Secretary to the Premier on Immigration and Settlement. I was very pleased to accept that appointment. In the past five months, I have been guided in my deliberations by some very passionate and dedicated people who love this province, and who want to see Saskatchewan be as strong, nationally and internationally, as we secretly know it can be. These are people who are tired of the same old saws about Saskatchewan not being as good as Alberta; about Saskatchewan being nothing more than bald prairie full of gophers and not much else; about Saskatchewan people being too dependent and not entrepreneurial enough. As I met with scores of people around the province, they told me that Saskatchewan is strong, and our people are inventive and optimistic about the future. They feel that by changing two things, we could almost literally conquer the world. Those two things are our attitude of defeatism and negativity about this wonderful province, and our lack of aggressive public policies to encourage population growth by stimulating immigration, both inter-provincial and international. I thank them all for their insight, and courage to state explicitly what many of us know to be true.

I have been ably assisted in the preparation of this report by some very keen individuals. Doug Elliot, of Sask Trends Monitor was both enthusiastic about the opportunity and acerbic about the need. Liisa Cormode, of L. Cormode and Associates was intense and thorough in her research. Dastegeer Sakhizai, a member of Saskatoon's Refugee Coalition, eagerly and conscientiously drafted a program proposal, feeling that finally someone would listen to the day-to-day needs and concerns of those immigrants and refugees who feel marginalized and under-employed. Felicitas Katepa-Mupondwa laboured long and hard over an unsolicited but brilliant idea. The staff at the Department of Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs, particularly in the Immigration Branch, was extremely co-operative, patient and considerate. Dr. Joe Garcea of the University of Saskatchewan was unstinting in his efforts to arrange consultations with a great number of very knowledgeable academics. Elaine Burnett of Regina was generous and helpful with advice and support. Rod Scansen, free-lance writer and meticulous researcher, kept me on track, assiduously checking facts and examining the pros and cons of various program initiatives and incentives, all the while maintaining his keen sense of humour and inspiration. Finally, Cheryl Marshall, my Constituency Assistant, displayed her usual calm competence, and kept the MLA home fires burning while coping with the raised expectations of the immigrant community that something positive would happen right away.

I most humbly and gratefully thank all these people, and everyone listed in the Consultations section. This report would not have been possible without you. I give you all full credit for any good ideas that government may adopt, and I accept full personal responsibility for any bad ones government chooses to ignore.

Pat Lorjé, MLA

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Appendix I

Destination Saskatchewan: Increasing Attraction and Retention of Inter-Provincial Migrants
Executive Summary
Liisa Cormode, Ph.D. and Maria-Laura Basualdo, M.A.

Appendix II

Demographic Trends in Saskatchewan: A Statistical Analysis of Population, Migration and Immigration
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Doug Elliot

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Report Methodology

It is no secret that the 24th Session of the Legislature of the Province of Saskatchewan has been one most memorable by virtue of the tight numbers in the House, with only a few votes ever separating the Government and Official Opposition. This has resulted in Government Members having few, if any, opportunities to be absent from the Legislature during regular sittings. Therefore, as a consequence, the ability to consult widely, both within and outside the province, on the matter of changing public policy regarding immigration initiatives and incentives was limited, to say the least.

Consequently, rather than hold public hearings on this matter, I decided instead to encourage various stakeholders and opinion-makers to meet with me privately, and also to attend as many public functions dealing with immigration and population policy matters as possible. As well, I sought the expert analyses of several respected theoreticians and researchers, and commissioned three separate reports.

Meetings were held with any groups who wished to have an influence on this topic. Diverse groups such as the Saskatchewan Truckers Association, the Assemblée Communautaire Fransaskoise, the Saskatchewan German Council, and the Global Gathering Place all solicited meetings with me. I also initiated meetings with several REDAs (Regional Economic Development Authorities), Mayors, representatives from all Saskatchewan's public post-secondary institutions, and most government departments or Ministers of the Crown. I also met with the directors of all the major settlement agencies in Saskatchewan. I traveled to Calgary, Winnipeg, New York and Buffalo to gather information and ideas, and attended many major events sponsored by people associated with immigrant and refugee issues, such as the Saskatchewan Visible Minority Employee Association Conference, World Refugee Day, the Saskatchewan Immigrant Women's Community Consultation, and the Saskatoon Sudanese Community's Cultural Celebration. I spoke at several public functions, including the successful "Double the Population" Conference held this spring at the University of Saskatchewan. I also met with representatives from Saskatchewan's Aboriginal community. I was unsuccessful in arranging face-to-face meetings with representatives of certain other major opinion-shapers, such as organized labour, though the offer of meeting was made. Due to time constraints, I was not able to meet with them, nor to have an in-person meeting with the Federal Minister of Immigration, Hon. Denis Coderre. We were, however, able to have a lengthy and amicable discussion on the telephone.

There were a few guiding principles for the preparation of this report. Fairness to Saskatchewan's Aboriginal peoples was the leading principle. Ignoring the advantage of having a dynamic young Aboriginal population is folly. It is essential to recognise that better education and training for Aboriginal youth and enhanced international immigration are complementary, not competing, goals.

Indeed, each suggestion put forward was examined to ensure that nothing in this report would pit groups or individuals against each other or arouse resentment in any part of the population. The tremendous support that existed from the beginning of this process made that task less difficult than it might sound.

Fiscal responsibility was another guiding principle as was the knowledge that half measures will not produce the desired results.

In the most perfect of all worlds, broader public consultations would have been held, with meetings in many of Saskatchewan's towns and cities. Nevertheless, the constant message was that I was willing to meet with any individual or group who expressed an interest in the matter of increasing Saskatchewan's inter-provincial and international in-migration. No group who wished to have input on the shaping of this policy was denied, though I did turn down a few requests to do individual case-work on immigration matters, since that was not the mandate of my appointment. Overall, whenever I spoke with Saskatchewan people about the topic of immigration, I was impressed with the rare, and refreshingly high degree of confluence of public opinion. I received only three bits of negative feedback, all of them suggesting that the real issue was retention of Saskatchewan's young people, rather than attraction of newcomers. While I agree that this is also a topic of great interest and importance to the province, my mandate was to report on initiatives and incentives that may improve Saskatchewan's opportunities to attract and retain newcomers- international immigrants and inter-provincial migrants.

I hope that I have discharged this obligation satisfactorily.

Introduction

Saskatchewan is home to a little more than one million people. That fact in and of itself does not sound all that extraordinary. Manitoba has a population of a little more than one million people as do the states of Hawaii, New Hampshire and Maine. We're a small province without traffic jams, smog or long commutes to work. We know our neighbours and we know our politicians.

It's cold here in the winter but our natural gas prices are not soaring like they are in other jurisdictions so we are able to keep relatively warm. Besides, it's a dry cold.

Our one million people are spread out all over, less concentrated even than Maine and Manitoba. If you want to visit friends and relatives you might have to get in your car and drive. In Saskatchewan, you can afford your auto insurance.

The cost of living in places like Calgary and Toronto seems ridiculous to us; the congestion of the big cities, unreal. We know, even if nobody else does, that Saskatchewan is not all flat prairie. The prairie gives way to the parkland and the parkland to the forest and lakes, each with their own special and often rugged beauty.

It's a great place to raise children. It's a great place to retire. And Saskatchewan has plenty of kids and plenty of senior citizens, higher proportions of both groups than anywhere in Canada. Grandparents and grandchildren. Sounds idyllic doesn't it?

Saskatchewan is ethnically diverse and truly multicultural. This is no recent development. Saskatchewan was multicultural before the phrase was even invented.

Saskatchewan has been known as the social laboratory of North America. We invented Medicare here and Canadians love us for it. We champion the co-operative spirit and revel in our strong sense of community.

Why doesn't everyone want to live here?

Once there was hardly anyone living here. By the last quarter of the 19th century the Aboriginal population of what is now called Saskatchewan had been decimated by disease and poverty. Newcomers weren't settling here in great numbers either despite the existence of a transcontinental railroad, the presence of a respected and competent North West Mounted Police force and a radical piece of legislation, *The Dominion Lands Act, 1872,* which offered quarter sections of good farmland in exchange for $10.00. Spontaneous migration to the region was low. It seemed you couldn't pay people to move here.

Paying people to move here was a bit too radical an idea, and unnecessary. Sir Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior in the Government of Wilfrid Laurier from 1896 to 1905 was a Manitoban who had a keen understanding of the economic potential of western Canada. He developed Canada's first large-scale immigration policy and campaign to people the west. Farmers from the United States, Great Britain and all over Europe were encouraged emigrate and settle. Central and eastern Europeans came to Saskatchewan seeking prosperity and a new home. Sifton took some heat for casting such a broad net. He was accused of diluting the Anglo character of the region because he encouraged eastern Europeans. Viewed from today's perspective of the successes those immigrants have achieved, many of the criticisms seem ridiculous. For instance, some people complained that the newcomers didn't speak good English. And the variety of Christianity they practiced contained different rites. Moreover, they dressed funny.

Luckily, the reactionaries lost out in the long run.

Lord Sifton's policies resulted in Saskatchewan boasting a population over 500,000 by 1914. In 1935, 930,000 people called Saskatchewan home, most of them immigrants or the sons and daughters of immigrants. It's often said that we had one million people in the 1930's but we didn't reach that psychological milestone until 1983. We haven't slipped below that mark since. But we haven't significantly increased it either.

A close examination of Saskatchewan's history demonstrates that our population numbers are almost as unpredictable as the weather. At times, the statistics seem to defy logic. Our population continued to grow through the first six years of the great depression. Who would want to live in Saskatchewan in the middle of the dirty thirties?

There doesn't seem to be much of a relationship between governments and population either. People came and went while Douglas and Lloyd were in power. Same for Thatcher, Blakeney, Devine and Romanow. While we take our politics seriously in Saskatchewan, no one ever said about Ross Thatcher or Allen Blakeney, "This province ain't big enough for the two of us."

Taxes don't seem to have the impact that some would argue either. In an attached report, Doug Elliot, Saskatchewan's leading demographic guru, demonstrates not only that there is no correlation in Saskatchewan between taxation levels and population levels but that there is no such relationship in Alberta either. We hear all the time that people leave Saskatchewan because of the taxes but the facts don't bear it out. After all, if taxes had such an effect on where people lived, Saskatchewan would be the third most populous province in the country according to the Fraser Institute. Furthermore Mississippi would have twice as many people as California.

Whatever the reasons for our population malaise, one thing is sure. It won't fix itself. If someone says a change in government or a tax break will fix it, they obviously haven't done their homework. If someone tells you that "relaxing" our labour laws will fix it they are missing the point that most people who live here, and most people who would move here, work for a living. Labour laws exist because many people demanded them.

But do we even need to fix the population size? Is it broken? What's wrong with having only a million people? It must be about more than prairie bragging rights.

Saskatchewan's population is aging. In that we are very similar to practically every jurisdiction in North America. We have a negative natural growth rate, fewer births than deaths. Again, much like the rest of Canada and the United States. We have net out-migration, more people leaving than arriving, and the most mobile part of our population is our young adults.

At a time when every jurisdiction in North America is beginning to compete for labour force and prime time taxpayers, Saskatchewan can no longer afford to be a net exporter of young people.

Consultations with business groups, industry associations and Crown Corporations indicate a looming labour shortage. The Elliot report backs this argument up and demonstrates that Saskatchewan will be short in its labour replacement by 50,000 to 100,000 persons over the next ten to fifteen years.

Saskatchewan's large cohort of Aboriginal youth is our best competitive advantage. It is estimated that between 30,000 and 40,000 aboriginal young people will enter the workforce over the next fifteen years. It bears repeating that we all must redouble our efforts to ensure the educational success of aboriginal young people at this time in our history. Even so, the numbers of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young people in our province simply don't support a scenario where we can replace our retiring workforce, let alone expand. In the next ten to fifteen years, if we do nothing, more people will leave the work force through death, illness or retirement than we can replace through adequately educated First Nations and Métis people. Yes, the growing Aboriginal population is a definite competitive advantage. But it is not quite enough.

This is an urgent issue. It is time for compelling public policy and action. The population stagnation in Saskatchewan won't fix itself without significant intervention. It's time to be pro-active.

Every province in Canada experiences youth out-migration. We are a mobile population. But not all provinces lose more young adults than they gain. Retention efforts, while necessary, fall short of addressing population and labour supply challenges. We need to turn our attention to attraction as well as retention. Attracting immigration from international sources and in-migration from other parts of Canada is essential. Other jurisdictions realize this as well.

A recent labour force analysis commissioned by the City of Toronto calls for increased international immigration to bolster that city's workforce and for the federal government to forgo its current efforts to regionalize its immigration policy. Toronto is already the destination for a wildly disproportionate number of Canada's newcomers. With all due respect to Hogtown, Saskatchewan is prepared to welcome immigrants as well, and the decentralized approach suits us just fine.

In addition to a more regionalized approach to immigration, federal Minister of Immigration, Hon. Denis Coderre, has recently announced an easing of the point selection system. Instead of needing to accumulate 75 points in order to be able to immigrate to Canada, people now need only 67 points. This is a very positive "welcome mat".

Currently eight provinces, including Saskatchewan, have agreements with the federal government allowing them to nominate individuals for immigration. Quebec does not have a nominee program as such. Instead, their agreement is broader, and lets them select all immigrants except family class ones. Only Ontario, which receives such a disproportionate share of Canada's immigrants and refugees, does not have a nominee program or a special arrangement like Quebec.

Nominee programs allow provinces to set their own criteria for selecting individuals who are identified as being of benefit to those provinces. Federal authorities maintain the responsibility for health, security and criminality checks but provincial nominees are not required to meet other federal criteria, determined by the points system, required for admission to Canada. Provincial nominees usually enjoy significant fast tracking due to the fact that their applications are processed provincially rather than going directly into the cue of the backlogged federal system.

Manitoba has been, by far, the most aggressive pursuer of international immigrants to meet population goals and labour force needs.

Here in Saskatchewan, efforts to attract international immigration and inter-provincial migrants have already been undertaken by government and communities alike. The Immigration Branch of the Department of Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs was established to take advantage of the new role provinces were assuming in immigration and to address some very specific economic development issues in terms of skills shortages and labour supply. The Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) has expanded from its original focus on specific skilled workers and a Business category to include a Farmer Owner/Operator category, and a Critical Impact Employee category that is used for special cases where a unique skill or special need can be met by a nomination. Temporary Foreign Workers are also processed under the SINP existing work permit category.

The SINP has also added to the number of nominees processed each year. In 1998, one person was nominated under the SINP. Last year 52 nominee applications were successfully processed. In 2003, 75 applications had already been processed by fiscal mid-year. These nominees come from countries such as Great Britain, the Ukraine, Germany and Korea. There are skilled workers and entrepreneurs available from all corners of the world. The *Saskatchewan - Canada Agreement on Provincial Nominees* allows for up to 200 nominees per year. This cap should be easily re-negotiated since it has been increased several times in Manitoba. We can, and we should, do more!

Although the province is starting to see a larger number of successful immigrations through the SINP, it is not good enough to simply let the program status quo prevail. Changes to the staffing size of the program, and some of its internal policies and procedures will need to be implemented. This is because, under the current program, Saskatchewan, representing 3.3% of the population of Canada, receives only under 1% of immigrants and refugees. So, our current rate of immigration is low compared to most of the rest of Canada. What is even worse, though, is our low immigrant retention rate.

In 1999, the net number of immigrants living in Saskatchewan, that is, the number after in and out migration, was 56% of the total destined to the province during the previous ten year period. In comparison, Manitoba kept 74% of its net immigrants and Alberta kept 97% over the same ten year period. This is shocking in a province that prides itself on its multicultural promotion. Clearly changes are needed to both beef up the level of immigration to Saskatchewan, and to improve our retention rate.

And there is every reason to feel optimistic that the changes proposed in this report, and a more welcoming attitude about population growth will bring about the desired results. Manitoba, a place with a climate as rugged as ours, and a geography almost as beautiful as ours, has achieved amazing results for population increase by focusing on a sound immigration strategy. Rather than relying on, say tax cuts and deregulation to increase their million population by 10,000 per year over the next ten years, they have, instead, become very aggressive with their immigration attraction and retention programs and policies. They are very confident that they will achieve a 10,000 person annual population increase through immigration alone.

International immigration is not the only source for newcomers to Saskatchewan. Initiatives aimed at inter-provincial in-migration can attract people here from other parts of Canada.

An excellent example of a spontaneous, local initiative of that sort is the Last Cattle Frontier. The Last Cattle Frontier has been a successful venture by the Good Spirit Regional Economic Development Authority and its partner, Ducks Unlimited, to promote east central Saskatchewan as an affordable and attractive option for Alberta ranchers. Rural Municipalities, communities and local businesses came on board to attract people and investment. Even in the wake of the BSE scare and resulting border closure, Last Cattle Frontier partners are optimistic about the long-term outlook for their region. Last Cattle Frontier is a classic example of Saskatchewan's co-operative spirit and ingenuity.

The topic of increasing Saskatchewan's population resonates throughout the province right now. As one bit of anecdotal and coincidental proof, I offer the following: when I was first appointed as Legislative Secretary, an attempt was made to draw upon the "*Our Future is Wide Open*" campaign, and to expand it by labeling the immigration strategy as "*Your Future is Here*". However, in mid-September, I received a notice from the Saskatchewan Rotary Clubs inviting me to a launch of an initiative they are also calling "Your Future is Here". They are dealing with Saskatchewan's population plateau of one million by working to develop strategies to retain young people.

Rather than confuse the two initiatives, I have opted instead to reflect some of the fervour of Lord Sifton, and rename this immigration strategy. *Open Up Saskatchewan* is a three word summary for what I consistently heard in my consultations, namely, that the province should encourage and embrace newcomers. This is our best solution to the looming labour supply problem.

Saskatchewan has always demanded made-in-Saskatchewan solutions to Saskatchewan challenges. The boldness and creativity of Saskatchewan people often leads the way for the rest of Canada as well.

Open Up Saskatchewan has drawn on the best practices of provinces like Manitoba, New Brunswick and Quebec but it is a made-in-Saskatchewan document. It was made in meetings with industry leaders, small business people and farmers, government departments, Crown Corporations and scholars, REDA's and communities, Aboriginal leaders and immigrants and refugees themselves. *Open Up Saskatchewan* proposes a Saskatchewan answer to a Saskatchewan question.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Part One: INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRATION

First Nations and Métis Concerns

It must be noted that representatives of Saskatchewan's Aboriginal community have expressed concerns about the prospects of increased immigration. FSIN Chief Perry Bellegarde has publicly questioned the need for increased immigration at a time when Aboriginal people do not enjoy the same labour force participation as Non Aboriginals and at a time when a large cohort of aboriginal youth are preparing to enter the workforce.

It is hoped that the demographic analysis presented in this report will assuage concerns amongst Aboriginal peoples about employment opportunities for Aboriginal youth. It is imperative that it be recognized, given the projected labour supply demands, that immigration will not reduce opportunities for Aboriginal peoples. However, concerns may also exist about adjustments to the way provincial resources are allocated. While attention has been paid in the preparation of this report to continued fiscal responsibility, cost implications obviously exist. These cost implications must not interfere with programs and services for Saskatchewan's Aboriginal residents.

Therefore, the over arching recommendations of this report are as follows:

RECOMMENDATION:

That the implementation of any or all of the following recommendations not undermine programs and services for Saskatchewan's Aboriginal people.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan strengthen its commitment to Aboriginal education and workforce participation with this commitment clearly demonstrated in both policy and the allocation of resources.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan increase its efforts to ensure full and equitable participation by First Nations and Métis people in the economy of Saskatchewan by accelerating its Treaty Land Entitlement activities and by improving resources dedicated to the Aboriginal Employment Development Program (AEDP).

Skilled Workers

The Immigration Branch of Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs (GRAA) administers the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) under agreements with the Government of Canada. The SINP was developed to incorporate immigration into the province's economic development toolbox. Designed to address labour shortages in specific skilled occupations, the program's parameters have been relatively narrow to date. Since the establishment of the SINP, the Designated Skills Shortage list has governed the eligibility of most nominee candidates. A considerable advantage exists for candidates who are members of occupations identified as part of a designated skills shortage.

In anticipation of a broad labour force supply shortage, it has been suggested both internally by Immigration Branch officials and externally in consultations with a wide variety of interested parties that the skill shortage approach might be eliminated. One reason for doing so is that even without an acute labour supply shortage across all industries and sectors, the complex and fluid nature of our economy is such that the skills shortage list does not always accurately reflect the labour needs as they exist and develop. In other words, by the time the skill shortage list identifies an acute shortage and by the time immigrants have entered Saskatchewan to offset that shortage, the needs may be more acute in another area not on the list. Furthermore, skills shortages may differ from one region of the province to another.

The projections of the August 2003 Elliot report *Demographic Trends in Saskatchewan* (see Appendix) indicate that over the next 10 - 15 years the labour force will not be replaced if current trends continue. The crucial demographic factor is age so the result will be a labour shortage across all sectors and in all occupations. This is also so even given Saskatchewan's "competitive advantage" of a growing young Aboriginal population, and even if increased efforts to ensure adequate educational attainment within this cohort occurs. Elliot's report indicates that 30,000 to 40,000 young aboriginal people will enter the labour force age group, whereas, depending on the assumption about future labour force participation rates, inter-provincial flows, and mortality rates, there will be at least 50,000 and possibly as many as 100,000 "extra" people leaving the labour market over the next ten to fifteen years. This shortfall, varying from 10,000 to 70,000 workers, depending on assumptions, is not acceptable if Saskatchewan's economy is to be sustained and expanded.

In the Introduction to this report, it was noted that Saskatchewan currently has a fairly low immigrant retention rate. While eliminating the Designated Skills Shortage List will certainly result in a larger pool of potential applicants under the SINP, some degree of caution must also be exercised, at least in the first few years of opening up this program. If the approved nominees do not have an actual job offer in Saskatchewan, there is a risk our retention rate will deteriorate. Many individuals could be nominated and pass the points test without having a job offer here in Saskatchewan, and there would be very little to encourage them to remain here. Therefore, the emphasis, once the Designated Skills Shortage List is eliminated, should be upon approving workers who have actual job

offers. This cannot, nor should not, of course, be cast in stone, but it does need to be carefully monitored.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Immigration Branch eliminate the Designated Skills Shortage list and modify criteria in order to attract qualified members of any and all skilled occupations.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Immigration Branch, in order to achieve greater retention of nominees, amend its criteria to increase the number of points awarded to skilled workers with job offers in Saskatchewan.

Semi-skilled Workers

There are diverse opinions about the issue of expanding the SINP to allow for enhanced international immigration from other than highly skilled professionals. Not all sectors were probed, but one sector that did initiate consultations immediately after the appointment of a Legislative Secretary with the responsibility of examining options for increased immigration to Saskatchewan was the long haul trucking industry.

Consultations with members of Saskatchewan's trucking industry reveal a critical and chronic shortage of long haul truck drivers in Saskatchewan. SINP criteria define skilled occupations as those requiring no less than 6 months of post-secondary education. Under this criterion, truck drivers therefore fall into the category of semi-skilled.

While it has not been the policy of the Immigration Branch to place occupations defined as semi-skilled on the skills shortage list or to nominate semi-skilled workers under the SINP, a pilot project has been suggested that would allow long haul truck drivers with Temporary Foreign Worker permits to apply under the SINP after the expiration of their permits.

Due to the limited consultations that were able to be conducted on this issue of broadening the SINP to a broader range of semi-skilled workers, this report will not recommend an expansion of immigration policy designed to attract semi-skilled and unskilled workers. However, it is strongly encouraged that a case by case, industry by industry and occupation by occupation approach to semi-skilled workers should be adopted on a test basis. This could be done without undermining larger policy objectives. It would also allow for broader industry consultation. Industry should have to demonstrate that positions cannot be filled by Saskatchewan residents; that aggressive and culturally sensitive efforts have been made to recruit Aboriginal workers and that any dearth of applicants is not the result of less than competitive wages or less than attractive working conditions.

At this juncture, the above criteria have been met by Saskatchewan's trucking industry with respect to long haul truck drivers.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Immigration Branch develops a pilot project on a priority basis to allow for admission of long haul truck drivers directly through the SINP and that this pilot project be reviewed after one year.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Immigration Branch reserve the right in policy to make similar arrangements for other semi-skilled workers as the need arises and where strict criteria established for the protection of Saskatchewan workers has been met.

Low-skilled Workers

Representatives of Saskatchewan's agricultural sector including ACRE have indicated a need for inclusion of low-skilled labourers under the SINP. Industries within the agricultural sector and outside the agricultural sector requiring low-skilled labourers should be encouraged to concentrate their recruitment efforts on Saskatchewan residents seeking entry-level jobs firstly, and then to look towards other programs, such as the federal government's Migrant Worker program.

Recently, a great deal of excitement was generated by the Federal government's decision to allow migrant workers here. This has been a thorny issue all across Canada, and the Federal government's approach has been a cautious and complex one. It is too early to tell if their approach will be successful, but this report's mandate is not to deal with migrant worker opportunities. The objective of this report is to recommend practical measures to encourage the growth of Saskatchewan's permanent population base, not to recommend measures for temporary fixes to fluctuating labour demands.

RECOMMENDATION:

That there be no expansion of the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program to include low-skilled workers.

Business Category

The business category under the SINP was established to nominate individuals who want to immigrate to Saskatchewan as entrepreneurs. As well as a strong residency requirement, the current policy dictates that a viable business plan be proposed and that the resulting business contributes to economic diversification. This policy prevents SINP business category nominees from starting businesses that would be in direct competition with existing Saskatchewan businesses. The narrow parameters of this program are such that succession issues for existing businesses that may cease to operate without a change in ownership cannot be addressed by entrepreneurial immigration. Another important narrowing factor is that business proposals must fall within one of ten economic sectors.

Given the limitations of the SINP business category and in keeping with the spirit of this report, which has already recommended an expansion of the Skilled Worker category, eliminating the economic diversification requirement for the Business Category would be appropriate. Allowing entrepreneurial immigrants to establish and operate businesses in competition with existing businesses will help to address succession issues and provide another private sector engine for economic growth.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Immigration Branch broaden the Business Category beyond its current focus on economic diversification and a limited number of economic sectors.

Immigrant Investors

Skilled workers, immigrant entrepreneurs and immigrant farmers are already recognised as desirable candidates for admission to Saskatchewan under the SINP. Saskatchewan also has a need for greater investment capital.

Previous attempts by provinces to attract immigrant investors have produced undesirable results. Mismanagement of immigration investment funds has resulted in litigation that, in some cases, is still before the courts.

Currently, the federal government requires that immigrants wishing to apply as passive investors (investors not involved in the day to day operation of a business) must apply through the Canada or Quebec immigrant investor programs. Provincial immigrant nominee programs are not allowed to develop passive investment categories.

Consultations with members of Saskatchewan's investment community with experience in the now defunct Immigrant Investor Program indicate that while the original program was vulnerable to corruption, the necessary changes to address issues of accountability within the program had been implemented immediately prior to the program's

discontinuation. Nevertheless, the poor retention rate of Saskatchewan's immigrant investors had also produced a general distaste for the program.

The prevailing attitude within the investment community is that the program was salvageable but was discontinued due to the disgrace brought upon it by a minority of unethical practitioners and political haste to over-correct a problem.

If Saskatchewan wishes to attract immigrant investors, approval of the federal government is required. Consultations with investors and provincial government officials indicate that they feel the federal government has little or no willingness to negotiate an investor category with the provinces. However, the point still remains that there was some merit to the original program, and the federal government may wish to review its objections in light of the new climate of this century.

Any initiative to attract immigrant investors must be a joint enterprise of the Immigration Branch and the Department of Industry and Resources. The Department of Industry and Resources would be better positioned than the Immigration Branch to scrutinize the investment proposals and should be the lead department in establishing and administering the new program, with close monitoring by the Department of Finance.

Any successful initiative to attract immigrant investors must feature a strong residency requirement and residency incentives.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan negotiates with the Government of Canada to re-establish an immigrant investor program with strong safeguards, building on the lessons learned from the past program.

RECOMMENDATION:

That any new immigrant investor program contain a strong residency requirement.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Department of Industry and Resources be responsible for all aspects of program administration other than those exclusively related to immigration.

Foreign Students

Our post secondary educational institutions are tremendous assets in our efforts to attract immigration. The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) and the Regional Colleges are key resources if we are to improve our retention of immigrants and refugees to Saskatchewan. They are the entry points for many settlement and support programs that can lead to greater permanent settlement of offshore newcomers. The University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina are also key resources because they are major attractions for bright, ambitious foreign students who could be a major source of immigration for Saskatchewan. Foreign students already account for a significant part of our student population relative to other Canadian universities.

Changes in federal legislation, allowing holders of student visas to work in Canada for one year after graduation and recognizing the legitimacy of duel intent, have created an excellent opportunity for enhanced retention of qualified individuals eager to participate in our economy. Creating a student category under the SINP would allow foreign born graduates to enjoy a more seamless transition to permanent residency and provide the province with an expanded pool of highly skilled individuals.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Immigration Branch establishes a Foreign Students category under the SINP to allow for the nomination of foreign born graduates employed in Saskatchewan.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan negotiate with the Government of Canada to establish a pilot project, similar to one existing in New Brunswick, that would extend the period foreign students are allowed to work in Canada after graduation to 2 years.

Exchange Students

The dual benefit of exchange student programs for Saskatchewan is the introduction of foreign students to our province and the ambassadorship provided by Saskatchewan students studying abroad. In an attached brief, *Expanding International Mobility for Study and Experience: A Tool for Securing Saskatchewan's Future*, Asit Sarkar, of the College of Commerce, University of Saskatchewan, proposes a specific and practical exchange program targeting nations with which Saskatchewan has, or wishes to establish, strong business ties.

Under this proposal, the government of Saskatchewan would sponsor a student abroad and participating businesses, government agencies or non-profit organizations would sponsor a foreign student at one of Saskatchewan's post secondary institutions.

This type of exchange program will foster a better understanding of Saskatchewan in other parts of the world while encouraging strategic relationships for Saskatchewan interests.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan establish an exchange program based on the model proposed in *Expanding International Mobility for Study and Experience.*

Costs for Foreign Students

Foreign students have been correctly identified as a potential resource for Saskatchewan's work force. Foreign students are also an attractive source for international immigration because their exposure to Saskatchewan over the period of their course of study makes them better candidates for retention than other immigrants. However, efforts to attract foreign students must take into account the practical reasons for choosing Saskatchewan as a place to study. Currently the Government of Saskatchewan greatly subsidizes the cost of education for the average post secondary student while foreign students pay almost the entire cost of their education. These costs and the share of total costs assumed by foreign students vary among different under-graduate programs.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan examine, within the context of continued fiscal responsibility and its commitment to affordable education for Saskatchewan residents, the option of targeted bursaries for foreign students with limited funds in a way that brings education costs for these foreign students more in line with those encountered by Saskatchewan students.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Saskatchewan universities examine their admission policies to ensure that there are no artificial barriers created for admission of foreign students.

English Language Proficiency Examinations

Similarly, the cost associated with demonstrating English language proficiency for entrance into Saskatchewan's post secondary educational institutions poses a financial barrier for many foreign students. Examinations such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) are entrance requirements for foreign language students wishing to attend our universities or SIAST.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the government of Saskatchewan defray the costs of recognised English language proficiency examinations for students enrolling in Saskatchewan post secondary educational institutions.

Work Specific Language Training

Fluency in English has been identified by immigrants and refugees as the single greatest advantage one can enjoy in Saskatchewan's job market. English language training is funded by the Government of Canada through the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program. It has been suggested that the LINC program falls short of meeting the needs of immigrants and refugees. It has also been suggested that the Government of Saskatchewan respond to the shortcomings of LINC. Rather than merely assume a greater share of the federal responsibility to provide basic official language instruction, Saskatchewan should respond with programs designed to meet the practical needs of immigrants and refugees seeking employment and keeping it.

One alternative to traditional English language training is work specific language training designed to prepare individuals for the specialized vocabulary they will encounter in various workplaces. It is an unfortunate truism that facility in English can be obtained without gaining fluency in the language of the specific work environment, be it a construction site or an office building.

Offering work specific language training presents a challenge precisely because of the variety of work environments that exist in Saskatchewan. However, consultations with educators, especially SIAST, have been very encouraging about this sort of approach. SIAST campuses and Saskatchewan's Regional Colleges can be mobilized to provide work specific English language instruction.

Also, industry sectors, regulatory associations and individual employers should be encouraged to assist individuals with work specific language training.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Department of Learning assist SIAST and Saskatchewan's Regional Colleges in providing work specific English language training and that access to work specific language training for immigrants and refugees not be cost prohibitive.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan establishes programs enabling regulatory associations, industry associations and individual employers to provide work specific language training.

The Right to Communication

Ensuring the availability of official language instruction for immigrants and refugees is essential. We must also recognize the time and effort required to gain facility and conversational ease in a new language. Some immigrants, particularly older immigrants, may never achieve this degree of fluency in English or French. The resulting barrier in communication can cause distress for many immigrants at some point in their lives.

The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code provides for the right to freedom of expression through all means of communication. However, where an individual's inability to communicate in an official language impairs their right to freedom of expression, the right to freedom of expression is, for all practical purposes, meaningless.

Canadians enjoy the right to communicate, by interpreter if necessary, with government agencies in either English or French. Outside of the courts, little provision is made to ensure the right of communication for individuals who speak neither of Canada's official languages. This is also an issue for many native Cree and Dene speakers in northern Saskatchewan.

The right to communicate, especially with healthcare providers, should be considered a basic human right.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan commit to making every effort to uphold the right of communication by providing translation services for individuals needing to communicate with government agencies and healthcare providers in languages other than English and French, including sign language.

Costs of Credential Recognition

One of the greatest obstacles to full participation in Saskatchewan's work force and economy faced by immigrants, refugees and their spouses is recognition of qualifications obtained outside of Canada. The government of Saskatchewan currently contracts with the International Qualification Assessment Service (IQAS) to perform assessments of educational qualifications obtained outside of Canada. This agency provides an excellent service and it would not be prudent at this time for Saskatchewan to develop its own in-province expertise in competition with IQAS.

With few exceptions, IQAS fees are the responsibility of the individual who is having his or her qualifications assessed. This barrier has been identified by groups such as the Saskatchewan Visible Minority Employee Association (SVMEA) as prohibitive to the individual yet a close examination of the average costs paid in a given year by the total number of Saskatchewan residents obtaining services from IQAS suggests that provincial coverage of IQAS fees would amount to a minor treasury expense. This relatively minor and tightly restricted public expense would send out a strong welcoming signal to international immigrants contemplating permanent Saskatchewan residency.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan pay for all assessment fees through IQAS for Saskatchewan residents and for successful SINP applicants who are about to take up residency in the province.

Regulation of Trades and Professions

Regulation of trades and professions is a provincial responsibility. Associations such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons are self-regulating under provincial legislation. This is appropriate because the expertise required to deal with disciplinary issues exists amongst the members of the occupation in question. Saskatchewan's regulatory associations determine the necessary qualifications and grant licenses and certification to practice in a variety of trades and professions.

Many immigrants and refugees, even those who have received assessments of their academic credentials from agencies such as IQAS, are unable to work in their chosen fields because of the difficulties they face in licensing/certification. Across Canada, physicians, engineers and many other professionals are unable to fully explore their potential because they are unable to gain licensing from the appropriate regulatory association.

While our regulatory agencies are entrusted with the responsibility to ensure safety and competency in the performance of a wide variety of trades and professions, and while

standards for licensing/certification may differ from country to country, Saskatchewan must work to avail itself of the skills offered by highly trained immigrants and refugees.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan, especially the Departments of Learning and Health, work with Saskatchewan's Regulatory Associations to help facilitate changes in their policies and practices in order to guarantee the fair and equitable treatment and the inclusion of qualified, foreign trained professionals and tradespersons.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Immigration Branch devote one FTE to assisting government departments and regulatory association's efforts enhance recognition of foreign trained professionals and tradespersons.

Note on Regulation of Trades and Professions

Recently, Minister of Immigration, the Hon. Denis Coderre, has taken measures to make regulation of immigration consultants a federal responsibility. This departure from the norm is warranted and welcomed for Saskatchewan where too few immigration consultants practice to establish a viable regulatory association.

It should also be noted that a submission was received from the Saskatchewan German Council recommending that the Government of Saskatchewan provide funds for them, as a community agency, to undertake specific recruitment of immigrants from Germany. This proposal is included in the Appendices. The proposal requested $39,500 to undertake two recruitment trips, and to underwrite certain administrative and office overhead expenses. It was made from the point of view that this would be seed money, and that the recruitment ventures would then become self-financing due to the fees the Council would raise from potential immigrants.

This report endorses Hon. Denis Coderre's initiatives to develop a regulatory framework for immigration consultants, whether they are individuals or spring from cultural communities. Therefore, it would be illogical and premature to support the Saskatchewan German Council's proposal at a time when work is happening on a national immigrant consultant regulatory association. Additionally, it is not considered appropriate for the government of Saskatchewan to fund any organization or individual consultant who would be charging fees to prospective immigrants or to encourage, by virtue of funding a particular cultural association, immigration from one particular country over others with equally qualified applicants.

Newcomer Internship

English language training, credential recognition, and removal of barriers to licensing/certification, while necessary, do not address all the issues faced by immigrants and refugees in Canada. Newcomers often face discrimination in the workforce, sometimes subtle, sometimes overt. Refugees often face a period of enforced absence from the workforce until permanent residency is established. Cultural differences can also make the transition to Saskatchewan's workforce a difficult proposition.

In an attached paper, *A Key Approach to Foster the Retention of Newcomers in Saskatchewan*, Dastageer Sakhizai, a member of Saskatoon's Refugee community and contributor to the *Meeting Needs and Making Connections* report, examines these barriers and recommends that an internship program be established, with incentives for employers that would assist the integration of newcomers struggling with under-employment.

Mr. Sakhizai suggests a 7-point program that would partner settlement service agencies with SIAST and the Government of Saskatchewan. The proposal in brief is as follows:

1. Voluntary registration of newcomers seeking employment;
2. Generation of a database of employers willing to accommodate interns;
3. Employment readiness training;
4. Introduction of internship candidates to prospective employers;
5. Midterm assessment of intern performance;
6. Skills upgrading, as required;
7. Re-introduction of interns to the work place.

This approach is practical, and could provide many immigrants with that one item on their resume - working experience in Saskatchewan - that they so desperately need in order to secure permanent employment here in Saskatchewan.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan, in consultation with settlement agencies, establish a pilot project, based on the model proposed in *A Key Approach to Foster the Retention of Newcomers in Saskatchewan*, for a newcomer internship program.

Settlement Services

The Government of Saskatchewan is supported by member organizations of the Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA) in its efforts to retain immigrants and refugees. As well, in response to the government's immigration consultation initiative, called *Meeting Needs and Making Connections*, the Provincial Settlement and Integration Planning Council, which has a broader service agency and stakeholder representation, was created. There has been much progress on the recommendations arising from that process but there is still a need to consider other innovations in program policies. The Regina Open Door Society, the Saskatoon Open Door Society, the Moose Jaw Multicultural Council and the Prince Albert Multicultural Council all provide excellent programs designed to support newcomers in their respective communities.

Settlement services for immigrants and refugees in Canada are funded directly by the federal government except in the provinces of British Columbia, Manitoba and Quebec. These two provinces have reached agreements with the Government of Canada to administer settlement services. This option is open to Saskatchewan but consultations with settlement service agencies have demonstrated a desire among those individuals working in settlement services to maintain the current arrangement with the federal government. This is in spite of reductions in federal funding of $428,000 since 1999-2000. It must be emphasized that these reductions have hampered the ability of these agencies to provide the top-quality and timely services of which they are so proud.

While this report will not recommend that the Government of Saskatchewan assume the administration of settlement services, it is clear that any expansion of provincial immigration policy carries with it an obligation to increase the provincial contribution to our settlement agencies.

Currently the Government of Saskatchewan provides only $100,000 in grant funding per year through SAISIA to the Saskatchewan's settlement service agencies.

One other issue that was raised in consultations with the Global Gathering Place of Saskatoon is that some charitable agencies providing services to newcomers face difficulties in recruiting and screening volunteers.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan increase its annual funding for settlement services to $600,000.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Immigration Branch devotes no less than two FTE's to assist existing agencies with settlement services.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation actively explore funding possibilities for a volunteer recruitment and screening program, with specific reference to the needs of settlement-serving agencies.

Immigration Branch

The *Saskatchewan – Canada Agreement on Provincial Nominees* allows for no more than 200 nominees per year. It should be noted that nominees are principal applicants only and do not include immediate family members. Most often, nominees are accompanied by immediate family members. The total number of individuals introduced to the province through the SINP is conservatively estimated at twice the number of principal applicants.

The Immigration Branch currently operates with a staff complement of 10 FTE's. Branch officials are responsible for all aspects of policy development, promotion and administration. To date the Immigration Branch has not nominated 200 principal applicants in any given year.

If Saskatchewan is to experience a significant increase in international immigration, the SINP is our best tool and the cap of 200 nominees per year must be raised.

Consultation with federal Minister of Immigration, The Hon. Denis Coderre, as well as the experiences of provinces like Manitoba, suggests that Saskatchewan could re-negotiate its nominee agreement to allow for a significantly greater number of nominees. A condition precedent would be that Saskatchewan achieves its current target of 200 nominees as a means of demonstrating its capacity and willingness to absorb more international immigrants.

Given the staffing requirements of earlier recommendations and given an expansion of the SINP, it follows that greater resources need to be allocated to the Immigration Branch in terms of budget and personnel.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the *Saskatchewan - Canada Agreement on Provincial Nominees* be renegotiated to increase the cap on nominations from 200 per year to 500 per year over the course of the next 3 years, 1000 over the next 5 years and 1500 over the next 8 years with provisions to re-visit the agreement annually.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan increases the staff complement of the Immigration Branch to 25 FTE's over 3 years and that dedicated resources be provided for promotion of the SINP both abroad and to Saskatchewan communities.

The Role of Communities

Communities, as well as employers, stand to benefit from increased economic immigration. In Manitoba, which has been the most aggressive proponent of increased immigration, smaller communities such as Winkler and Steinbach have been revitalized by the introduction of new Canadians. In consultations with Saskatchewan communities and community leaders, smaller cities such as Yorkton and groups with a distinctly rural focus like the Action Committee on the Rural Economy (ACRE) have been among the most enthusiastic supporters of increased international immigration. It is essential that the communities in which newcomers will live take an active role in the promotion of their communities through the SINP and just as active a role in welcoming international immigrants.

Perhaps the greater challenge for Saskatchewan communities, both rural and urban, is providing a welcoming presence for newcomers. We must entertain no illusions about the difficulties new Canadians may encounter in their new communities. Despite being a nation peopled largely by the descendants of immigrants, Canada still harbours a certain degree of anti-newcomer sentiment. The attitude that an immigrant has come to take someone else's job will persist in some quarters despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. The notion that newcomers should leave their culture, language and even religious beliefs at the border also exists despite national pride in our multicultural model and our constitutional protections of diversity. Blatant racism, though condemned by the majority of reasonable Canadians, still exists.

Much of this has been muted by the very beneficial role that existing cultural agencies have played. Saskatchewan has become a better place to live, work and play because of them. They are to be commended for their fantastic work in ensuring that we remain true to our provincial motto- *From many peoples, Strength.* As well as assisting those who have multi-generational roots in Saskatchewan to understand that we are a mosaic, not a melting pot, they also play a key role in supporting and welcoming newcomers.

Communities expecting an influx of immigration must prepare themselves and take ownership of the new direction in which they are moving. In an attached paper, Dr. Felicitas Katepa-Mupondwa has prepared a model for a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (S.W.O.T.) analysis that communities could follow to ensure that newcomers are made welcome and local area residents made comfortable with the inevitable change that accompanies any cross cultural encounter. This approach will be very beneficial- both for communities and for newcomers proposing to settle here, especially in rural Saskatchewan.

It will be critical, whenever possible, for these analyses to be led by recent immigrants themselves.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan, in partnership with local communities, contract with qualified agents to perform S.W.O.T. analyses for communities preparing to welcome newcomers.

Sponsorship

Currently, churches are the most frequent sponsors of refugees and their families. It has been suggested that other organizations may be encouraged to engage in sponsorship. If a critical mass is required to retain significant numbers of individuals within a specific cultural community, it follows that Saskatchewan's sponsorship efforts should be ramped up. Saskatchewan's traditional welcoming spirit is a tremendous advantage in our efforts to attract immigration. A broader and more enthusiastic approach to sponsorship would be one of the best ways to demonstrate this spirit of openness.

Businesses, communities and community organizations could all be encouraged to sponsor. The crown sector could also take a natural leadership role in this effort.

It was even suggested during consultations with ACRE that smaller communities might consider an "adopt a country" approach. Creative ideas such as this should be explored.

Sponsorship of refugees is regulated by the Government of Canada under the *Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA).

Communities and Regional Economic Development Authorities should be encouraged to take an active and leading role in employer sponsorship efforts and settlement service providers should be made aware of the details of sponsorship initiatives in the regions they serve.

As an aside, it should be noted that the REDA's are good economic development tools. However, in meetings with some of them, it was suggested that they could be more effective if government were to review the sheer number of them, and their consequently limited boundaries. The recent changes to the Health District boundaries were commented on favourably.

Because federal regulations govern refugee sponsorship, the following recommendation is meant only to suggest a direction that local municipalities and the regional economic development authorities may wish to take, recognizing that they will have to deal with Citizen and Immigration Canada (CIC). However, it is a suggestion that may assist smaller Saskatchewan communities who clearly want an influx of new residents to overcome some of the perceived and real advantages and attractions of the large immigrant attracting cities like Toronto and Vancouver.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA), the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) and interested REDA's develop an appropriate model to encourage expanded sponsorship arrangements with the objective of improving immigrant retention.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan consult with all REDA's to determine if co-terminus boundaries with the Health Authorities would be helpful to the REDA's.

Extended Families

Retention of immigrants is as important an element of Saskatchewan's population equation as attraction of immigrants. In many consultations the question of which immigrants were most likely to remain in Saskatchewan was raised. The consensus was that those immigrants finding a matching cultural community or having family already established in Saskatchewan were the most likely to stay and make their permanent home here in Saskatchewan. The Immigration Branch uses a broader definition of family than is normally associated with family class immigration administered by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). It also awards extra points for an applicant who has a family member resident in Saskatchewan. This could either be increased, or the Immigration Branch, once it is in a position to significantly increase the number of applicants it processes each year, could publicize this point allocation criterion more aggressively within existing cultural communities in Saskatchewan. This would then have the result

of current successful immigrants to Saskatchewan encouraging family members from their home countries also to immigrate.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Immigration Branch review their criteria for allocating points for candidates, and also publicize the fact that additional points are given for applicants with family members who have already established permanent residency in Saskatchewan.

Landing Fees

Fees associated with entering Canada, including the Right of Permanent Residence Fee (RPRF) formerly known as the Right of Landing Fee (ROLF) and other processing fees for applicants, spouses and children, are charged by the Government of Canada to offset costs of services provided to immigrants. Saskatchewan charges no such fees and receives no reimbursement from CIC for administrative costs assumed by the province when processing SINP applicants.

In 2000, the ROLF was eliminated for most refugees and their family members on humanitarian grounds.

Providing relief on provincial income tax returns to offset the cost of landing fees would be one way of attracting immigrants to Saskatchewan both from abroad and from other provinces. However, rather than simply paying the fees as a means of attracting immigrants to Saskatchewan, providing relief on provincial income tax would ensure that those individuals benefiting are both participating in the provincial economy and remaining resident at least long enough to acquire tax responsibilities.

At the same time, the promotion of the existence of such a program would send a strong signal of "open door welcome" to people contemplating immigration to Canada, and it would give Saskatchewan a competitive advantage in recruitment of international immigrants.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan provide a specific provincial income tax reduction equal to the costs incurred by immigrants for all fees associated with landing in Canada.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan encourage the Government of Canada to provide a transfer of a portion of the revenues obtained through processing fees paid by provincial nominees to the province performing the administrative functions associated with the nominees' application.

Processing Facilities

Currently the processing center in Buffalo, NY handles the lion's share of SINP applications. Consultations with staff at the Buffalo office indicate that applications received from officials in Saskatchewan's Immigration Branch are expert and thorough, requiring very little additional attention by federal officials. However, the capacity of the Buffalo office to handle additional applications beyond our current allotment of 200 is low. A sharp increase in the number of nominations would result in a bottleneck in the Buffalo office. This would effectively eliminate the fast tracking advantage for provincial nominees.

Two possible solutions are proposed. The government of Saskatchewan may indicate the need for additional federal resources for the Buffalo mission in order to enhance this office's ability to expedite Saskatchewan nominees. Or, since the requirement for off-shore application for qualified SINP applicants has been eliminated, the government of Saskatchewan could instead encourage the Government of Canada to establish an immigration processing center in Saskatchewan. This alternative would certainly facilitate the increasingly seamless relationship between the SINP and the federally administered Temporary Foreign Worker Permit program. The establishment of such a facility would be in keeping with the commitment by the federal government to a more regionally based immigration strategy. The establishment of such an office would also produce an economic benefit to the province including jobs.

One other related matter that was raised during consultations was the practice of the Immigration and Refugee Board not to hear appeals here in Saskatchewan. The relatively low volume of appeals was cited as reason for this. However, if Saskatchewan is to retain its fair proportion of refugees, as determined by the Government of Canada, it is essential that residents of this province be able to access a full service package. Travel costs for refugees and their advocates can be prohibitive in such a geographically large province as ours, and it is not good enough to tell people that they should travel to Winnipeg. An immigration processing centre in Saskatchewan could also house this service.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan encourages the Government of Canada to establish an immigration processing centre in the province of Saskatchewan.

Advisory Council

The Provincial Settlement and Integration Council, established in response to the Meeting Needs and Making Connections report, provides leadership and support to government on issues associated with the settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees.

Immigration as an economic and labour force development tool also has tremendous support in Saskatchewan. Industry leaders, educators, and communities have all expressed profound interest in and enthusiasm for expanded immigration policy in Saskatchewan. Most of the recommendations in this report were generated in consultation with interested parties outside of government. Many people consulted felt that an immigration advisory council should be established to take advantage of the leadership offered by such a wide cross section of the Saskatchewan public. The council would appropriately be composed of representatives of communities, business, labour and immigrants and refugees themselves and mandated to address issues of labour supply and economic development.

Furthermore, a strong presence at the table for representatives of Saskatchewan's Aboriginal community is an essential element of any such advisory body.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan establish an Immigration Advisory Council to provide ongoing leadership in the shaping and implementation of immigration policy, with Saskatchewan's Aboriginal Community assured of significant representation.

Part Two: Inter-Provincial In-Migration

Acceptance of the basic premises of this report, namely, that Saskatchewan faces an urgent need to increase the population of this province, and that this can not be accomplished without active policy and program changes, requires a focus on both international and inter-provincial sources for new residents. The preceding recommendations have been primarily directed to international immigration as a tool to increase Saskatchewan's population. However, consultations also focussed on improved inter-provincial migration, and a special report reviewing options and techniques employed elsewhere in Canada was commissioned.

In the attached report, *Destination Saskatchewan: Increasing Attraction and Retention of Inter-Provincial Migrants*, Dr. Liisa Cormode, of L. Cormode and Associates Research Services, offers recommendations for the attraction and retention of people from other parts of Canada, including Saskatchewan residents who have left home; Canadian born residents of other provinces and international immigrants living in other parts of Canada. Dr. Cormode performed an exhaustive survey of the best practices of other jurisdictions seeking to attract and retain population. Her recommendations are eminently practical and are addressed not only to provincial government departments but to communities, regional economic development authorities and businesses.

Dr. Cormode's recommendations also reflect much of what was heard in the current consultations, demonstrating again the rare confluence of thinking that currently exists in Saskatchewan in terms immigration and population.

Upon reviewing her report a number of recommendations designed to promote inter-provincial migration to Saskatchewan can be made. In the body of this report, only certain specific suggestions of hers are incorporated into recommendations. However, all her suggestions merit detailed review.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan, especially the Immigration Branch, thoroughly review all recommendations offered in the report *Destination Saskatchewan* with the report being made available on line at the Immigration Branch website.

Our Future is Wide Open

The Government of Saskatchewan's *Wide Open Future* campaign promotes Saskatchewan as a place to live and do business. The campaign is an excellent and necessary effort to let the rest of Canada, and indeed the world, know what Saskatchewan

has to offer. That it is also an exercise in public morale, at a time when business and community leaders are calling for attitude adjustments, is wholly justifiable.

But it is as a promotional endeavor that the *Our Future is Wide Open* campaign must succeed if we expect to compete with other jurisdictions seeking to attract people and investment.

The *Our Future is Wide Open* website is one of the campaign's best tools for long distance promotion but can be improved in some very specific ways.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the *Our Future is Wide Open* website better demonstrate Government's desire to attract individuals as well as businesses and that information on job availability and communities be enhanced and better promoted along with testimonials from new and returning Saskatchewan residents.

RECOMMENDATION:

That organizations such as REDA's and local chambers of commerce be encouraged to provide information about job and business opportunities through the *Our Future is Wide Open* website.

RECOMMENDATION:

That communities be encouraged to promote themselves as places to live, work and visit through the website.

Entrepreneurs

Succession is an important issue for many small Saskatchewan businesses. As a large contingent of Saskatchewan's workforce readies for retirement, so too do many Saskatchewan businesspeople. Expansion of the SINP Business category is one means of addressing succession issues. Entrepreneurs should also be encouraged to move to Saskatchewan from other parts of Canada, either to start a business or purchase an existing business.

Again, an excellent tool for promoting Saskatchewan's many business opportunities is the *Our Future is Wide Open* website. Based on the success of the *Last Cattle Frontier* venture mentioned in this report's introduction, REDA's are in an excellent position to identify local business opportunities for promotion.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan, in co-operation with REDA's and other local partners, identify Saskatchewan businesses for sale and that these opportunities be promoted through *Our Future is Wide Open.*

Recruitment by Business

The impression exists that there are no jobs in Saskatchewan. Very few available jobs are advertised. When one looks in the careers or help wanted sections of the province's newspapers it is not readily apparent that Saskatchewan needs workers. Similarly, websites devoted to job postings in Saskatchewan are often under utilized by employers. When Saskatchewan residents, including recent graduates, and residents of other provinces don't see jobs advertised, they presume that they simply don't exist. They presume they need to look elsewhere in Canada for employment and career advancement.

Saskatchewan's small business sector has always been one of our province's most dynamic drivers of economic growth and job creation. But small businesses rarely have Human Resources departments. Consultations with business community representatives indicate that small businesses refrain from traditional advertising to avoid bombardment with resumes and applications. While this reasoning may be sound at a time when the full implications of an aging workforce have yet to be felt, a labour supply shortage coupled with the false impression that there are no jobs would not only be ironic, but potentially disastrous.

It is imperative that businesses be encouraged to advertise available positions. As competition for skilled workers across Canada increases, Saskatchewan cannot allow the "no jobs" notion to linger.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan, in co-operation with business organizations and economic development agencies, encourage Saskatchewan employers to take a more active role in the promotion of our province by better advertising job vacancies.

Employment Agencies

Currently the department of Community Resources and Employment (CRE) partners with Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) to run Canada - Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services (CanSask) which operates the *Sask Jobs* website.

A number of other employment agencies currently serve Saskatchewan employers and job seekers. Some of these agencies are mandated to meet the needs of specific workers,

including aboriginal workers. The First Nations Employment Centre (FNEC) is one such agency.

Also, a number of websites like *saskatoonwork.com* exist with links to other job sites.

The Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority (SREDA) identified the absence of a comprehensive, one stop employment agency as an obstacle to employer's recruitment efforts. This concern was reinforced in consultations with the Regina REDA. Currently, individuals seeking employment may register with a number of different agencies affiliated with one or more levels of government. No single agency meets the needs of all job seekers or employers. A less fragmented approach would benefit both employers and those seeking employment.

A single meeting place for employers and employees could be developed without diminishing the roles of agencies already mandated to provide specific types of services. If registration by an individual seeking employment at one agency automatically registered the individual in the comprehensive agency, employers would have access to the streamlined, one stop approach SREDA recommends and those seeking employment would come to the attention of a greater number of potential employers.

CRE in partnership with HRDC could engage in efforts to establish CanSask and *Sask Jobs* as the comprehensive entities identified as necessary.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the department of Community Resources and Employment, in co-operation with its federal partner HRDC establish Can Sask as a comprehensive, one stop employment recruitment and registration center by means of automatic linkages to other agencies through the *Sask Jobs* website.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan, through the *Our Future is Wide Open* campaign and other avenues, aggressively promote the *Sask Jobs* website as Saskatchewan's one stop meeting place for employers and job seekers.

RECOMMENDATION:

That CanSask be assisted in increasing its efforts to engage employers.

Family Attraction Program

A deciding factor for many individuals considering relocation is availability of employment for spouses. This point was raised repeatedly during consultations. An initiative designed to help spouses of individuals relocating to Saskatchewan to obtain appropriate employment would provide an edge in the competition for talent.

The Saskatoon Family Attraction Program previously administered by SREDA and funded by CanSask offered a variety of services including employment counselling and assistance with job searches to spouses and partners of skilled workers relocating to Saskatoon. The program was unique in Canada in its scope. A similar program in Montreal was available only for international arrivals.

The Family Attraction Program was established as a pilot project and ran only for one year. Success of a program of this nature would depend largely on awareness.

If Saskatchewan hopes to gain a competitive advantage in the attraction and retention of highly skilled individuals either domestically or abroad, a province-wide program based upon the experience of the Family Attraction Program model should be implemented.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan, in co-operation with its federal partner in CanSask, HRDC, develops and implements a province-wide version of the Family Attraction Program.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the new Family Attraction Program be advertised aggressively, especially through the *Our Future is Wide Open* campaign.

Immigrants Living Elsewhere in Canada

Saskatchewan, indeed most of Canada, finds itself in stiff competition with Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver in its efforts to attract and retain immigrants. In so much as extended families and matching cultural communities are identified as key retention factors for immigrants, attracting recent immigrants from other parts of Canada may assist in achieving a critical mass for some cultural communities.

Currently, the Immigration Branch works with local cultural organizations wishing to promote themselves abroad. Partnerships between government and cultural associations seeking to promote our province domestically would also be appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation examine ways to offer assistance to cultural organizations seeking to promote Saskatchewan across Canada as a desirable place to live.

Returnee Residents

Among Saskatchewan's greatest potential resources for increasing the population are former Saskatchewan residents. Saskatchewan people enjoy a reputation for success no matter where they live and work. Returnees understand the benefits of living in Saskatchewan first hand and have close personal ties to the province. Former Saskatchewan residents who may have left to seek opportunities elsewhere or simply out of a sense of adventure should be a targeted audience for any campaign to attract inter-provincial migrants. Success in persuading former Saskatchewan residents to return would send the signal to other parts of Canada that Saskatchewan is **the place to be**.

Currently, Saskatchewan has no programs specifically designed to attract former residents. In this sense, we have some catching up to do.

The Manitoba Comebacks program is an example of an ambitious initiative by the province of Manitoba to identify their former residents and encourage their return. A Comebacks website has been created to educate former Manitoba residents about opportunities at home. Focus group research has been conducted which revealed a strong desire among many Manitoba expatriates to return. Manitoba Calling magazine is circulated free of charge to former residents identified by the Comebacks campaign.

If we expect to compete with other jurisdictions for talent, we must make a concerted effort to attract our own former residents.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan establish a program similar to the Manitoba Comebacks program to attract former residents to return to live and work in Saskatchewan.

Centennial Celebrations

The Province of Saskatchewan celebrates its centennial in 2005. Any initiative designed to attract former Saskatchewan residents should take advantage of this fortuitous timing. Preparations for centennial celebrations are already underway and efforts should be made to ensure that every former Saskatchewan resident living anywhere in the world be invited to the party.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Government of Saskatchewan launch an invitation campaign for centennial celebrations targeting all former Saskatchewan residents.

Throw a party. Invite people.

Conclusion

This report and these recommendations are hereby submitted for the consideration of the Government and people of Saskatchewan. As suggested earlier in *Open Up Saskatchewan*, our province has never shrunk from challenges. Indeed, we have been on the cutting edge of social policy in Canada for generations. Canada is a dynamic, prosperous and increasingly multicultural nation. Saskatchewan will insist on not being left behind. The challenges posed by population issues have already been taken up enthusiastically by our community leaders. Across all regional, political and cultural lines, Saskatchewan people are ready to move forward. We are instructed by our co-operative past and prepared to assume our natural leadership role in shaping Canada's future as we *Open Up Saskatchewan*.

Summary of Recommendations

First Nations and Métis Concerns

1. That the implementation of any or all of the preceding recommendations not undermine programs and services for Saskatchewan's Aboriginal people.

2. That the Government of Saskatchewan strengthen its commitment to Aboriginal education and workforce participation with this commitment clearly demonstrated in both policy and the allocation of resources.

3. That the Government of Saskatchewan increase its efforts to ensure full and equitable participation by First Nations and Métis people in the economy of Saskatchewan by accelerating its Treaty Land Entitlement activities and by improving resources dedicated to the Aboriginal Employment Development Program (AEDP).

Skilled Workers

4. That the Immigration Branch eliminate the Designated Skills Shortage list and modify criteria in order to attract qualified members of any and all skilled occupations.

5. That the Immigration Branch, in order to achieve greater retention of nominees, amend its criteria to increase the number of points awarded to skilled workers with job offers in Saskatchewan.

Semi-skilled Workers

6. That the Immigration Branch develops a pilot project on a priority basis to allow for admission of long haul truck drivers directly through the SINP and that this pilot project be reviewed after one year.

7. That the Immigration Branch reserve the right in policy to make similar arrangements for other semi-skilled workers as the need arises and where strict criteria established for the protection of Saskatchewan workers has been met.

Low-skilled Workers

8. That there be no expansion of the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program to include low-skilled workers.

Business Category

9. That the Immigration Branch broaden the Business Category beyond its current focus on economic diversification and a limited number of economic sectors.

Immigrant Investors

10. That the Government of Saskatchewan negotiates with the Government of Canada to re-establish an immigrant investor program with strong safeguards, building on the lessons learned from the past program.

11. That any new immigrant investor program contain a strong residency requirement.

12. That the Department of Industry and Resources be responsible for all aspects of program administration other than those exclusively related to immigration.

Foreign Students

13. That the Immigration Branch establishes a Foreign Students category under the SINP to allow for the nomination of foreign born graduates employed in Saskatchewan.

14. That the Government of Saskatchewan negotiate with the Government of Canada to establish a pilot project, similar to one existing in New Brunswick, that would extend the period foreign students are allowed to work in Canada after graduation to 2 years.

Exchange Students

15. That the Government of Saskatchewan establish an exchange program based on the model proposed in *Expanding International Mobility for Study and Experience*.

Costs for Foreign Students

16. That the Government of Saskatchewan examine, within the context of continued fiscal responsibility and its commitment to affordable education for Saskatchewan residents, the option of targeted bursaries for foreign students with limited funds in a way that brings education costs for these foreign students more in line with those encountered by Saskatchewan students.

17. That Saskatchewan universities examine their admission policies to ensure that there are no artificial barriers created for admission of foreign students.

English Language Proficiency Examinations

18. That the government of Saskatchewan defray the costs of recognised English language proficiency examinations for students enrolling in Saskatchewan post secondary educational institutions.

Work Specific Language Training

19. That the Department of Learning assist SIAST and Saskatchewan's Regional Colleges in providing work specific English language training and that access to work specific language training for immigrants and refugees not be cost prohibitive.

20. That the Government of Saskatchewan establish programs enabling regulatory associations, industry associations and individual employers to provide work specific language training.

The Right to Communication

21. That the Government of Saskatchewan commit to making every effort to uphold the right of communication by providing translation services for individuals needing to communicate with government agencies and healthcare providers in languages other than English and French, including sign language.

Costs of Credential Recognition

22. That the Government of Saskatchewan pay for all assessment fees through IQAS for Saskatchewan residents and for successful SINP applicants who are about to take up residency in the province.

Regulation of Trades and Professions

23. That the Government of Saskatchewan, especially the Departments of Learning and Health, work with Saskatchewan's Regulatory Associations to help facilitate changes in their policies and practices in order to guarantee the fair and equitable treatment and the inclusion of qualified, foreign trained professionals and tradespersons.

24. That the Immigration Branch devote one FTE to assisting government departments and regulatory association's efforts enhance recognition of foreign trained professionals and tradespersons.

Newcomer Internship

25. That the Government of Saskatchewan, in consultation with settlement agencies, establish a pilot project, based on the model proposed in *A Key Approach to Foster the Retention of Newcomers in Saskatchewan*, for a newcomer internship program.

Settlement Services

26. That the Government of Saskatchewan increase its annual funding for settlement services to $600,000.

27. That the Immigration Branch devotes no less than two FTE's to assist existing agencies with settlement services.

28. That the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation actively explore funding possibilities for a volunteer recruitment and screening program, with specific reference to the needs of settlement-serving agencies.

Immigration Branch

29. That the *Saskatchewan - Canada Agreement on Provincial Nominees* be renegotiated to increase the cap on nominations from 200 per year to 500 per year over the course of the next 3 years, 1000 over the next 5 years and 1500 over the next 8 years with provisions to re-visit the agreement annually.

30. That the Government of Saskatchewan increases the staff complement of the Immigration Branch to 25 FTE's over 3 years and that dedicated resources be provided for promotion of the SINP both abroad and to Saskatchewan communities.

The Role of Communities

31. That the Government of Saskatchewan, in partnership with local communities, contract with qualified agents to perform S.W.O.T. analyses for communities preparing to welcome newcomers.

Sponsorship

32. That the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA), the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) and interested REDA's develop an appropriate model to encourage expanded sponsorship arrangements with the objective of improving immigrant retention.

33. That the Government of Saskatchewan consult with all REDA's to determine if co-terminus boundaries with the Health Authorities would be helpful to the REDA's.

Extended Families

34. That the Immigration Branch review their criteria for allocating points for candidates, and also publicize the fact that additional points are given for applicants with family members who have already established permanent residency in Saskatchewan.

Landing Fees

35. That the Government of Saskatchewan provide a specific provincial income tax reduction equal to the costs incurred by immigrants for all fees associated with landing in Canada.

36. That the Government of Saskatchewan encourage the Government of Canada to provide a transfer of a portion of the revenues obtained through processing fees paid by provincial nominees to the province performing the administrative functions associated with the nominees' application.

Processing Facilities

37. That the Government of Saskatchewan encourages the Government of Canada to establish an immigration processing centre in the province of Saskatchewan.

Advisory Committee

38. That the Government of Saskatchewan establish an Immigration Advisory Council to provide ongoing leadership in the shaping and implementation of immigration policy, with Saskatchewan's Aboriginal Community assured of significant representation.

Destination Saskatchewan

39. That the Government of Saskatchewan, especially the Immigration Branch, thoroughly review all recommendations offered in the report *Destination Saskatchewan* with the report being made available on line at the Immigration Branch website.

Our Future is Wide Open

40. That the *Our Future is Wide Open* website better demonstrate Government's desire to attract individuals as well as businesses and that information on job availability and communities be enhanced and better promoted along with testimonials from new and returning Saskatchewan residents.

41. That organizations such as REDA's and local chambers of commerce be encouraged to provide information about job and business opportunities through the *Our Future is Wide Open* website.

42. That communities be encouraged to promote themselves as places to live, work and visit through the website.

Entrepreneurs

43. That the Government of Saskatchewan, in co-operation with REDA's and other local partners, identify existing Saskatchewan business opportunities for promotion through *Our Future is Wide Open.*

Recruitment by Business

44. That the Government of Saskatchewan, in co-operation with business organizations and economic development agencies, encourage Saskatchewan employers to take a more active role in the promotion of our province by better advertising job vacancies.

Employment Agencies

45. That the department of Community Resources and Employment, in co-operation with its federal partner HRDC establish Can Sask as a comprehensive, one stop employment recruitment and registration center by means of automatic linkages to other agencies through the *Sask Jobs* website.

46. That the Government of Saskatchewan, through the *Our Future is Wide Open* campaign and other avenues, aggressively promote *the Sask Jobs* website as Saskatchewan's one stop meeting place for employers and job seekers.

47. That CanSask be assisted in increasing its efforts to engage employers.

Family Attraction Program

48. That the Government of Saskatchewan, in co-operation with its federal partner in CanSask, HRDC, develops and implements a province-wide version of the Family Attraction Program.

49. That the new Family Attraction Program be advertised aggressively, especially through the *Our Future is Wide Open* campaign.

Immigrants Living Elsewhere in Canada

50. That the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation examine ways to offer assistance to cultural organizations seeking to promote Saskatchewan across Canada as a desirable place to live.

Returnee Residents

51. That the Government of Saskatchewan establish a program similar to the Manitoba Comebacks program to attract former residents to return to live and work in Saskatchewan.

Centennial Celebrations

52. That the Government of Saskatchewan launch an invitation campaign for centennial celebrations targeting all former Saskatchewan residents.

Consultations

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DESTINATION SASKATCHEWAN: INCREASING ATTRACTION AND RETENTION OF INTER-PROVINCIAL MIGRANTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The objective of this report is four-fold:

- describe different types of migrants from other parts of Canada that could be targeted through strategies to increase migration to Saskatchewan from other parts of Canada
- identify current initiatives and incentives in the province to attract inter-provincial migrants. These include provincial government programs, municipal marketing strategies, and local initiatives.
- compare measures adopted by selected jurisdictions to attract new residents from other parts of the country with those operating in Saskatchewan
- make recommendations on how Saskatchewan can attract and retain more people from other parts of Canada

Methodology

Existing initiatives and incentives in Saskatchewan were identified through internet and newspaper searches, and conversations with key informants. The migrant attraction and retention strategies of other Canadian provinces and cities, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, and U.S. states that had experienced continuing outmigration were identified through searches of the academic literature and the internet. Some key informants were also contacted.

Types of Inter-Provincial Migrants

Eight groups of migrants are targeted by existing initiatives in Saskatchewan or other jurisdictions studied, by some employers, or in Saskatchewan's current immigration strategy. These are:

- new residents in general
- skilled and highly-skilled personnel
- entrepreneurs
- farm owner-operators
- unskilled and semi-skilled workers
- former residents now living elsewhere ("comebacks")
- recent immigrants who have settled elsewhere in the country
- retirees

Each group has different motivations for moving to Saskatchewan, and distinct recruitment and retention issues. Discussion of how to attract people from other parts of Canada needs to focus on strategies aimed at different types of potential migrants.

Existing Initiatives and Incentives in Saskatchewan

Current measures to attract and retain people from other parts of Canada target potential migrants in general, skilled and highly-skilled workers, entrepreneurs, and retirees. The initiatives and incentives identified are:

Potential migrants in general

- the "Our Future is Wide Open" campaign
- the village of Harris' program to attract new residents
- the Saskatoon Labour Market Committee's saskatoonwork.com website

Highly-skilled and skilled personnel

- the Department of Health's central job website for healthcare professionals
- the Saskatchewan Physician Recruitment Project and incentives for physicians to move to Saskatchewan
- the Saskatoon Labour Market Committee's Employee Attraction and Retention Subcommittee
- employer-provided recruitment and relocation packages

Entrepreneurs

- the "Our Future is Wide Open" campaign

Retirees

- Watrous and Manitou Beach's retiree attraction initiative
- the "Our Future is Wide Open" campaign

Comparison of Initiatives and Incentives in Saskatchewan and Other Jurisdictions Studied

Measures to attract and retain six groups of immigrants are discussed in the report. No specific programs to attract farm-owner operators and unskilled workers from within the same country were identified.

Attracting Migrants in General

"TheOur Future is Wide Open" initiative is an important step in promoting Saskatchewan as a place to live. However, some information gaps on the website need to be addressed. The initiative is not as well integrated with larger labour market or population strategies as some programs elsewhere are. Other gaps include the lack of information about smaller Saskatchewan cities available through commercial relocation websites, and a need for more discussion about "diversity" and "welcoming communities."

Skilled And Highly-Skilled Workers

This group is very important for local economic development and quality of life, and competition for some personnel is now global. There are several important initiatives in Saskatchewan which seek to attract and retain such workers. Gaps in existing measures include:

- additional links and information are needed on the "Our Future is Wide Open" website
- a lack of community-based strategies to address recruitment and retention issues that include all stakeholders
- the potential contribution of former Saskatchewan residents who return must be evaluated

Entrepreneurs

The "Our Future is Wide Open" campaign targets business owners from other parts of Canada. This group of potential migrants could be one means to address business succession issues in Saskatchewan. However, the "Our Future is Wide Open" website needs to highlight opportunities for buying existing businesses, and provide more information about relocation.

Former Residents Living Elsewhere ("Comebacks")

Initiatives to encourage former residents to return are a growing trend in Canada and some other jurisdictions. Manitoba and New Brunswick have created "comeback" programs, as has the Australian state of Victoria. These initiatives differ substantially. Saskatchewan has not aggressively targeted this group as potential migrants, although many people have left to live elsewhere. This group may also be easier to recruit than other potential migrants.

Recent Immigrants Who Have Settled Elsewhere

Some jurisdictions and employers in the province of Quebec target this group as potential residents, although Saskatchewan has not. Initiatives in Quebec are consistent with, and supported by, provincial policy measures. Federal policy now encourages immigrants to settle outside of the largest cities.

Retirees

An initiative in Watrous and Manitou Beach seeks to attract retirees to that area, and its website can be accessed through the "Our Future is Wide Open" website. The websites

for Watrous-Manitou Beach and "Our Future is Wide Open" could be upgraded to provide more information about retiring to Saskatchewan.

Recommendations

The Government of Saskatchewan should develop a comprehensive strategy to attract and retain people from other parts of Canada. This should encompass smaller strategies aimed at key groups of potential migrants. The most important recommendations of this report are outlined below.

General attraction and retention strategies

These should be undertaken by both the Government of Saskatchewan and a variety of local actors. Key recommendations for the Government of Saskatchewan are to:

- broaden the "Our Future is Wide Open" campaign and redesign the program's website
- educate employers about the importance of advertising job vacancies so that potential migrants can assess opportunities available in the province
- increase awareness of effective recruitment and retention practices, and workplace diversity issues among employers, in partnership with industry associations and REDAs
- highlight the province's cultural diversity (including First Nations groups and visible minorities) when promoting Saskatchewan as a place to live
- inform communities about best practices in attracting and retaining new residents

Recommendations for local actors include:

- provide more information about relocation and training and employment opportunities on local websites
- create strategies to attract and retain people from other parts of Canada that focus on a "welcoming community"

Skilled and Highly-Skilled Personnel

The Government of Saskatchewan should develop a strategy in partnership with interested stakeholders to attract and retain this group. This could include measures to:

- identify licensing issues or barriers that hinder relocation to the province
- organize focus groups with immigrants to examine why they move and their experiences of living in the province
- establish a provincial roundtable in partnership with key stakeholders
- explore the feasibility of a province-wide program similar to the pilot Saskatoon Family Attraction Program

Entrepreneurs
The Government of Saskatchewan should develop a strategy to attract and retain this group, in partnership with interested stakeholders. This could include the enhancement of the "Our Future is Wide Open" website.

Farm Owner-Operators
The Government of Saskatchewan should consider developing a strategy to attract this group, in partnership with interested stakeholders.

Unskilled/Semi-Skilled Workers
It is not recommended that the Government of Saskatchewan undertake an initiative to attract this group. The demand for such labour can likely be met within the province.

Former Residents ("Comebacks")
The Government of Saskatchewan should explore the creation of an initiative to encourage former residents to return. Key recommendations include:

- conduct focus groups with former residents who have returned, especially those in hard-to-fill occupations
- monitor commercial websites for Canadian expatriates to ensure that they have accurate information and links about Saskatchewan
- identify existing networks of former residents, including those that are internet-based
- explore the feasibility of a "comeback" program similar to that of the Australian state of Victoria, which includes people in a variety of occupations and entrepreneurs

Recent Immigrants Who Have Settled Elsewhere in Canada
The Government of Saskatchewan should consider developing a strategy to attract and retain this group. This would increase the province's attractiveness as a destination for immigrants. Key elements of a strategy might include:

- inform Saskatchewan's immigrant communities, and immigrants living in other parts of Canada, that the province wants to attract newcomers who presently reside elsewhere
- ask Citizenship and Immigration Canada to fund research to assess whether there are immigrants living in Toronto or Vancouver who would be able to find work in Saskatchewan and are willing to relocate
- broaden the "Our Future is Wide Open" campaign to explicitly target this group
- enhance processes for the recognition of foreign credentials to give Saskatchewan a competitive advantage as a destination for immigrants
- encourage ethno-cultural communities, REDAs and other groups to explore partnerships to attract this group

Retirees

- It is not recommended that the Government of Saskatchewan create an initiative to attract this group. However, as several municipalities now market themselves as a retirement destination (or are seriously considering doing so), the Government of Saskatchewan should consider consulting regularly with these communities, and enhance the "Our Future is Wide Open" website to provide more information on retiring to the province.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is part of a general review of international and inter-provincial immigration issues prepared for the Immigration Branch of Saskatchewan Department of Governmental Relations and Aboriginal Affairs. The research was conducted by Doug Elliott, the principal of *QED Information Systems Inc.* and the publisher of *Sask Trends Monitor*.

The research mandate included a statistical description of immigration and immigrants and a comprehensive analysis of inter-provincial migration and how it affects Saskatchewan. The research was also to a) deal with the issues of how the labour force and the population of Saskatchewan may be increased, b) examine Aboriginal employment issues and c) document out-migration and in-migration issues.

Section 2 deals with the basic demographic characteristics of the province's population and how it changes. The major findings in that section are highlighted below in point form. All of the data are from Statistics Canada.

- Saskatchewan's population has been effectively at or near one million people for the past twenty years. Except for Newfoundland, other provinces are growing more quickly.

- The "baby boom" generation is still the dominant feature of the province's age structure. Compared with other provinces, Saskatchewan has a high proportion of older seniors and a high proportion of children and youth.

- Although Saskatchewan's fertility rate is one of the highest in Canada, the number of births is declining. The number of deaths is increasing so the "natural" growth rate –births less deaths – is declining. Much of the population growth in Alberta is a result of the higher natural growth rate there.

- Inter-provincial migration has resulted in a net loss of population in 25 out of the last 31 years and is the basic reason why the province's population hasn't grown. The loss of population because of migration is also an issue in several other provinces including Newfoundland, Quebec, and more recently, B.C.

- In terms of their age structure, Saskatchewan's inter-provincial in-migrants and out-migrants are similar to those in other provinces – many are youth but overall trends in inter-provincial migration are mirrored in each of the age groups. Saskatchewan has one of the highest rates of youth out-migration in Canada.

- Alberta is the destination for an ever-increasing proportion of out-migrants from Saskatchewan, accounting for 60% in the most recent year. It is also the single largest source for in-migrants, accounting for 50% in the most recent year.

- In migrants from the Atlantic provinces and Alberta tend to be in their late twenties and early thirties. Out migrants to Alberta, B.C. and the North tend to be in their twenties.

- Saskatchewan attracts very few international migrants; those who come tend to be younger than the province's current residents.

A special tabulation from the 2001 Statistics Canada census was obtained for the research. The information in Section 3 describes persons who were born outside Canada and who were living in Saskatchewan at the time of the census, that is, in May 2001.

This is a different population than the those who immigrated to Saskatchewan because it includes those who moved here from other provinces and excludes those who have left. Refugees, family class immigrants, and skilled workers are included in this group.

The findings from this section are summarized below in point form.

- Nine out of ten recent immigrants originally destined for Saskatchewan come from three immigration groups with approximately the same frequency – skilled workers, family class, and refugees.

- On a net basis, Saskatchewan retains just over one half (57%) of immigrants who originally come to the province, one of the lowest rates in Canada.

- 18% of Canadian residents are immigrants compared with 5% of Saskatchewan residents.

The majority of the data in this section refer to the 2001 population of immigrants in Saskatchewan. "Recent immigrants" are defined as those who came to Canada since 1980.

- One in four immigrants living in Saskatchewan came to Canada after 1990; the majority (56%) came after 1970.

- Recent immigrants are more likely to come from Asian countries – 42% do so – than their earlier counterparts. Among Saskatchewan residents who immigrated to Canada before 1961, 87% came from Europe.

- More than one half of recent immigrants are members of a visible minority group.

- 71% of recent immigrants are in the 20 to 59 age group (compared with 52% of non-immigrants). 52% are women.

- Although 71% of recent immigrants report a language other than English as their mother tongue and 61% use a language other than English at home, 95% can speak English well enough to carry on a conversation.

- Recent immigrants are, compared with non-immigrants or those who came to Canada before 1981, more likely to report a non-Christian religious affiliation or no religious affiliation at all.

- Recent immigrants in the 15 to 24 age group are more likely to be going to school – 68% did so in the 2000-2001 academic year – than non-immigrants.

- Completed education levels among immigrants, particularly those who immigrated after 1961, are much higher than among non-immigrants. More than one quarter have a university degree.

- Recent immigrants with a post-secondary education tend to have degrees, diplomas, or certificates in the physical sciences including engineering. They are less likely than non-immigrants to have one in commerce, business administration, or in the trades.

- Recent immigrants, particularly men, are more likely to be employed than non-immigrants although the rate of employment is not as high as one would have expected given their high levels of education and relative youth. Those who migrated from 1961 to 1980 have a very high attachment to the labour force, however, with 60% working full-time throughout 2000.

- Employment income among recent immigrants tends to be low, partly because employment for women is concentrated in low paying industries. Nevertheless, a much lower proportion of their income (11% in 2000) comes from government transfers than for the non-immigrant population (14%). Many of these women will be refugees.

- Three quarters (74%) of recent immigrants live in Regina and Saskatoon. Larger centres tend to have a higher proportion of recent immigrants than smaller ones although Prince Albert and Yorkton have relatively few immigrants, given their size, and Swift Current has a relatively high proportion.

Section 4 describes, largely in qualitative terms, some of the implications of an aging population.

To deal with the possibility of a general labour shortage which could affect economic growth and well-being, the best strategy is a continuing focus on education and employment for Saskatchewan's young and growing Aboriginal population. Increasing employment levels among the Aboriginal population presents significant challenges so, to be prudent, other approaches should also be pursued.

The approaches discussed in this section that would have a measurable impact include increasing employment rates among disadvantaged groups such as the visible minority population, the immigrant population, the disabled, and those receiving social assistance. Potential employment increases from this approach are, however, limited. Higher employment rates among those at or past retirement age may not be realistic and,

regardless, would only delay the impact of any general shortage of labour.
This section also describes the inter-connection between economic growth and population growth, pointing out that much of Alberta's strong economic performance has been the result of population increases.

If the province is to increase in size (both economically and in terms of population), a retention and an attraction strategy will be required. Unfortunately, the statistical evidence suggests that out-migration of current residents is cyclical and largely beyond our control. It does not appear to be driven by controllable factors such as taxes but by perception and momentum.

The section concludes with the realization that a strategy to attract people from other provinces and countries would probably be more successful than a strategy to stop current residents from leaving.

INCREASED IMMIGRATION TO RURAL AND URBAN SASKATCHEWAN

Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

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The government of Saskatchewan has announced the goal of significantly increasing Saskatchewan's population by as much as 100 %. Most of this population increase will come from increased immigration. This has serious socio-economic and environmental implications that require active citizenship engagement and comprehensive ex-ante analysis of the benefits and potential problems associated with such significant quantitative and qualitative shifts in the population. Research is needed to conduct an in-depth analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis) associated with increasing immigration to selected rural and urban areas of Saskatchewan. SWOT analysis is comprehensive and includes social, economic and environmental assessment parameters. The specific objectives of the research are:

1. To clearly document what local rural and urban Saskatchewan residents, including public and private sector stakeholders, consider to be the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of significantly increasing immigration, to their region in particular and to Saskatchewan in general.
2. To conduct a comprehensive SWOT analysis of significantly increasing immigration to selected rural and urban areas in Saskatchewan, using econometric qualitative choice models.
3. To develop and recommend strategies for significantly increasing immigration to Saskatchewan. These strategies will be practical, sustainable and regionally relevant, taking into consideration socio-economic and environmental factors of each region.

The research addresses each of the objectives as follows:

1. Dialogue with Saskatchewan residents will be conducted through a series of structured surveys and focus group discussions, in collaboration with local stakeholders including local government officials, local business and voluntary organizations.
2. The SWOT analysis is a complex and highly technical analysis, utilizing survey and archival data as well as theoretical socio-economic and environmental model projections. The analysis will use a series of econometric qualitative choice models. Qualitative dependent variable modeling will be used to estimate parameters of socio-economic, demographic and environmental variables that contribute to the SWOT of increased immigration.
3. Results from the dialogue and SWOT analysis will be utilized to develop regionally specific immigration strategies. The research will also develop a variety of

communication products targeted at the different stakeholders. This will include seminar/focus group presentations and discussions, fact sheets, posters, and technical papers targeted at policy makers, business and voluntary organizations, Saskatchewan immigrants, Aboriginal Peoples and the general population.

This research will result in important information and recommendations for use by local and provincial government policy makers and other public and private sector stakeholders. The research will identify specific strengths and opportunities that regional stakeholders can exploit to maximize the benefits of increased immigration. At the same time, the stakeholders will become aware of and mitigate against potential weaknesses and threats associated with increased immigration. The detailed consultation at the local level will initiate a critical dialogue and contribute significantly to a sense of local ownership, responsibility and increased participation in a process that will undoubtedly change the social landscape of the region. This is an important process and will minimize potential conflicts that usually accompany increased ethnic diversity in a community. By identifying potential investment and employment opportunities for immigrants, this research will contribute significantly to harnessing the full potential of immigrants for the benefit of both the immigrants and Saskatchewan. Immigration is important to Canada as a whole and therefore this research may have components that may be adopted by other provinces for the benefit of Canada as a whole.

The conduct of this research requires technical expertise, as well as active participation from local public and private organizations across the province, including local government councils, chambers of commerce and other business and voluntary sector organizations.

A key approach to foster the retention of newcomers in Saskatchewan

By: Dastageer Sakhizai
August, 2003

Summary

Statistics covering the 1980s and 1990s indicate that Saskatchewan has a significant out-migration of immigrants. It seems that this trend continues to the present time. The primary factor causing out-migration is unemployment and under-employment. This fact was confirmed through a study conducted by the Immigration Branch of the Government of Saskatchewan. Newcomers have a strong desire to work and to become self-sufficient as quickly as possible. Many immigrants and refugees leave Saskatchewan because they are unable to find meaningful work that accommodates their skills, knowledge and experience. Economic and social integration of newcomers has been a matter of national concern and therefore, has been the focus of studies by many researchers. Some authors consider social capital as a key dimension of immigration integration and suggest a direct correlation between social capital and social inclusion. "Foreign credential recognition, though important, can remove only part of the barriers to economic integration of immigrants. Emphasis must be placed on bonding social capital in immigrants' integration into the receiving society, through which immigrants can expand their social and economic opportunities." [1]

There are several barriers to equal opportunities for meaningful employment, that include: "Lack of knowledge of official language, lack of social network and contacts helpful in job search, and lack of perfect compatibility between the work skills and education and the new job demands. The lack of established procedures to adequately recognize the work experience and education acquired in the home societies, and overt discrimination on the part of employers and systemic discrimination around the qualification recognition". [2]

A report from the Government of Saskatchewan," Meeting Needs and Making Connections" confirms and reflects these barriers in its findings and offers policy recommendations for improving the retention of newcomers in Saskatchewan.

To foster retention of the newcomers in Saskatchewan, it is essential to address these barriers, ideally with long-term strategies.

In this paper, an internship program is suggested, which can play a key role in the retention of newcomers by addressing their employment issue.

Proposed strategy

Create an internship program (one year or six month term) funded by the provincial government, that embraces newcomers seeking employment in the province and match them with the relevant employers. The program is meant to create employment accessibility to newcomers through a partnership among the employers, the SIAST (from Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert and Moose Jaw) and the Saskatoon Open Door Society, the Regina Open Door Society, the Moose Jaw Multicultural Council and the Prince Albert Multicultural Council. This program should also have the work related language training and skill updating components as well. It will involve the following stages:
1) Registration of employment-seeking newcomers and determination of their eligibility. 2) Generating a database of employers that are willing to accommodate the interns.3) Employment readiness training. 4) Introduction of the internship candidates to respective employers.4) Midterm assessment of the interns performance. 5) Assigning skills upgrading and/or work related language - training to interns who are assessed at midterm evaluation to be in need of such training. 6) Re-introducing the interns after skill upgrading or language training.

Current immigration trends in Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan is presently receiving less than 1 per cent of the total number of refugees and immigrants who come to Canada compared to 1.5 to 2.5 per cent in the 1980s. This decrease is occurring at the same time that the Government of Saskatchewan is projecting labour shortages and has embarked on a course to develop a thriving economic and social environment in the province. The challenge as it relates to immigration, is to determine ways to recruit economic immigrants and retain immigrants and refugees who have already settled in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan's share of economic immigrants, which include skilled workers and business class, is declining and is far less than our neighbouring provinces. Many of these newcomers leave the province.

Statistics covering the years1980 to 1990 indicate that Saskatchewan has a significant out-migration of immigrants. The decline is from 60%in the early 80s to some 45% in the later part of the decade.

Literature Review

Integration an Issue of National Concern

Jean Kunz (2003), a Senior Policy Research Officer at Policy Research Initiative in her article " Social Capital: a Key Dimension of Immigrant Integration" points out: "Foreign credential recognition, though important, can remove only part of the barriers to economic integration of immigrants. Emphasis must be placed on bonding social capital

in immigrants' integration into the receiving society, through which immigrants can expand their social and economic opportunities." 1a

Skilled immigrants face not only the challenge of recognition of their foreign credentials by regulatory bodies, but also face the challenge of getting their qualifications recognized informally by the employers for the following reasons:
1) Not all immigrants are trained in regulated professions. Usually the employer

determines the value of their qualifications and,

2) Based on evidence, immigrants of non-European origin earn less than do their European counterparts with education and other social demographic factors being equal. Hence, the value of a degree depends on the individual attributes of its beholder. Success in the labour market depends as much on one's human capital as it does on the social capital one is able to accumulate. Kunz indicates integration as a two way street. "While knowledge of the receiving society facilitates the immigrants' transition initially, the warmth of welcome by the receiving society is critical to immigrants inclusion in the long run". She suggests that, "employers need to be aware and utilize the skills of immigrant employees. This is not always the case". 1b. A study in the United States indicates that employers think more highly of their European staff than of those from Asia, and a recent study in Canada highlights the discrimination against women wearing hijabs among Muslim women when applying for jobs. Kunz sums up: " Foreign credential recognition is not a silver bullet that can remove all barriers to the social and economical integration of immigrants. Social capital can play a key role in the successful integration of immigrants".1c

Increased social capital is generated by social inclusion and social exclusion reduces social capital, reduces the level of trust required for a vibrant economy and a well functioning society (Duncan Howard, 2003). Duncan indicates social inclusion as: "a society that is socially inclusive is a society that grants access to every one to the vehicles of the good life, as it is defined by that society" 2a. He recommends that, "promoting social inclusion is warranted because doing so increases social capital. For government to do so through framework policy and legislation together with support for community and non-governmental organizations is the most effective means to take."2b

Another writer, Rosaline Frith (2003) reports, "Settlement services and welcoming communities are both needed in the pursuit of successful economic and social integration for newcomers. Though orientation and basic language training are a good start, important barriers to full participation remain." 3a. She adds; " The creation of inclusive institutions and political process, and the participation of newcomers in those processes, is essential to their integration in Canada."3b

New comers face challenges particularly in the process of economic integration. According to Peter Lee (2000), "many factors including unequal opportunities, affect the earnings of immigrants, and the claim that immigrants' human capital is necessarily inferior because they earn less is tenuous at best." 4a, 5. He suggests that unfavorable

market conditions is the reason if some immigrants do not earn as much as native-born Canadians, and therefore, "the obvious policy option is to change the market conditions to bring about greater equality". 4b. Lee also recommends that, policies that focus on raising immigrants' human capital need to be balanced with policies to improve the market conditions for immigrants to take full advantage of their talents and human capital.

Shiva Halli (2000) analyzed census data of 1991 and 1996 and pointed out that factors behind immigrants' higher poverty rates are threefold.

"1) The larger economic factors such as employment and under employment, affect the whole population including immigrants.

2) The factors related to immigrants encounter with the host society, such as lack of knowledge of official language, lack of social network and contacts helpful in job search, and lack of perfect compatibility between the work skills and education and the new job demands.

3) The factors related to the encounter of the host society and the newcomers, such as, the lack of established procedures to adequately recognize the work experience and education acquired in the home societies, and discrimination both at individual and institutional level." 7a

Based on the above findings Halli recommends: "The real solutions need to be found where the real problems are". 6,7b.
"1) More thorough procedures need to be devised in order to adequately evaluate and recognize the past education and work experiences of immigrants.
2) More serious efforts are needed to unearth, and to mend, the latent facets of discrimination against immigrants in the economic domain."

Not surprisingly, the report "Meeting Needs and Making Connections" published by the Immigration Branch of the Saskatchewan Government in November 2002 confirms and reflects the findings of the above-mentioned researchers.

There are several valuable findings and policy recommendations in the Immigration Branch's November Report. This paper takes the position that the findings from the Immigration Branch Report, particularly the first three of these findings are the most important issues that need to be prioritized and addressed. Similar suggestions were made by the writer of this paper in a presentation on "Barriers to Employment of Immigrants and Refugees", held in the Saskatoon Public Library on October 22, 2001.

The findings are:

1. Better career opportunities is the most critical factor to improving settlement and retention of immigrants and refugees.
2. Opportunities to improve their language skills are essential to immigrants and refugees seeking to advance their employment and career prospects.

3. Many immigrants and refugees needing education and training to improve their career prospects are not getting it. 8

The findings in the provincial report are very consistent with what has been reported so far as challenges and barriers to integration of newcomers in Canada. Given the fact that the employment issue is considered as the critical factor in retention of newcomers in Saskatchewan, adopting a strategy or approach that can address this issue, will also play a key role in the retention of newcomers in this province.

Proposed strategy

The best way to achieve a better retention rate of newcomers in Saskatchewan is to develop a program that simultaneously addresses issues such as newcomers' work and education background compatibility with employers' job demands and language skills and discrimination. For this purpose the following program is proposed:

Name: Newcomers Employment Internship or alternatively Newcomers Employment and Training Program

Objective: To meaningfully integrate newcomers in the labour market in a proactive and expeditious fashion by providing incentives to employers.

Create an internship program (one year / six month term) funded by the provincial government, that embraces newcomers seeking employment in the province and match them with the relevant employers. The program is meant to create employment accessibility to newcomers through partnerships among the employers, SIAST and immigrant serving agencies in Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw and Prince Albert. This program should also have a work related language training and skill-upgrading component. It will involve the following stages:

1. Registration of employment seeking newcomers and determination of eligibility. Criteria for eligibility include; being legally able to work in Canada, being a foreign-born and trained professional and being unemployed or underemployed.
   Conducted by the Saskatoon Open Door Society, the Regina Open Door Society, the Moose Jaw Multicultural council and the Prince Albert Multicultural council.

2. Generating a database of employers that are willing to accommodate the interns.
   Conducted by the employers and SIAST.

3. Employment readiness training. Employment readiness training should involve skill assessment process, resume and cover letter preparation, interview skills and Canadian work culture.
   Conducted by the Saskatoon Open Door Society, the Regina Open Door Society, the Moose Jaw Multicultural council and the Prince Albert Multicultural council.

4. Introduction of the internship candidates to respective employers.
   Conducted by the Saskatoon Open Door Society, the Regina Open Door Society, the Moose Jaw Multicultural council and the Prince Albert Multicultural council.

5. Midterm assessment of intern's performance.
   Conducted by SIAST and the employers.

6. Assigning skills upgrading and / or work related language- training to interns who are assessed at the midterm evaluation to be in need of such training. Conducted by SIAST.

7. Re-introducing the interns to the work place after skills upgrading and / or language training.
   Conducted by the Saskatoon Open Door Society, the Regina Open Door Society, the Moose Jaw Multicultural council and the Prince Albert Multicultural council.

Consultations On this Proposal

The writer of this paper held eleven consultation meetings with individuals representing stakeholder groups. The feedback has been very positive as it addresses the core issues regarding newcomers' retention.
Individuals consulted:

1. Dale Botting, SREDA, outgoing CEO.
2. Jan Katerynych, Saskatoon Open Door Society, Executive Director.
3. Shelina Qassam, Saskatoon Open Door Sosiety, Former Executive Director.
4. Rodolfo Pino, Saskatchewan Intercultural Association, Chair of the Board.
5. Nayar Javed, Immigrant women of Saskatchewan.
6. A number of former refugees and immigrants.

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Expanding International Mobility for Study and Experience: A Tool for Securing Saskatchewan's Future

It has been suggested that one of the factors influencing decision to locate in a foreign country and particularly within a specific region in that country is influenced by the potential immigrant's familiarity with the new environment. This is especially true when immigrants consider locating in cities and towns that are prominent internationally. International students can be viewed as an important source of future immigration to Canada. To the extent they can develop familiarity with a particular province or city, it can broaden their selection of future immigration locations. Accordingly, it has been suggested that extending the current period of post-graduation employment eligibility can enhance their familiarity with the workplace of the province in which they have been educated and as such, they would likely consider that province favourably in their selection of future immigration locations.

Within this context, here is another suggestion that can provide significant incentives for young persons from abroad to consider permanent location in Saskatchewan while at the same time expanding the international outreach for Saskatchewan's young persons. Such an "*International Mobility for Study and Experience*" could work in the following way:

- Saskatchewan government provides financial support for Saskatchewan's young persons to participate in overseas study and experience programs that are part of an institution's study plan and/or a business/government agency's human resource development plan.
- The participating Saskatchewan institution/business/government agency/nonprofit organization commits reciprocal financial support for short-term study or experience program in Saskatchewan for young persons from countries with which such institutions/businesses/government agencies/nonprofit organizations have developed formal agreements for such exchanges.
- The period of such reciprocal exchange would be a minimum of six months and a maximum of twelve months.

Such a program will enable Saskatchewan's young persons to develop greater awareness of overseas organizations and business environment and in the process, help identify mutually beneficial relationships for Saskatchewan organizations in the future. It will also provide them with better skills to be successful in a globally competitive environment.

The program will also encourage Saskatchewan's education, business, government and non-profit sectors to seek out appropriate organizational partners in different parts of the world that would be of potential strategic long run value, and become better aware of common opportunities and problems.

Together, this will build a greater awareness of Saskatchewan around the globe and in particular, instill within a large pool of young persons around the globe the values and benefits of establishing a future in Saskatchewan.

For further information and elaboration, please contact: Asit Sarkar (asit.sarkar@usask.ca)

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September 15, 2003

PAT LORJE,
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Dear Ms. Lorje:

The purpose of this submission is to outline the structure and advantages of a Community Recruitment and Retention Immigration Strategy (CRRIS) as a uniquely cost effective way to grow Saskatchewan's economy and strengthen its social fabric. SGC is eager to participate in a pilot CRRIS program which would serve as a model for ethnic groups interested in immigration as a way to revitalize their own cultures, strengthen the economy and generate alternative income streams. CRRIS recognizes a natural advantage of Saskatchewan – its close-knit mosaic of ethnic communities – and envisions their active cooperation with business and government in the entire immigration process from recruitment and settlement.

It is accepted that the retention of immigrants increases when they settle into welcoming communities. The Council is willing and able to organize effective immigrant support networks in our communities throughout Saskatchewan. The good will of our volunteer rural and urban memberships combined with the language, customs and experiences they share with the new immigrants are prerequisites to forming the best possible welcoming environments. The Ukrainian Canadian Congress-Saskatchewan Provincial Council (UCC-SPC), whose demographic position in Saskatchewan is similar to SGC's, is already willing to participate in the CRRIS program. It is anticipated that other provincial ethnic groups would also eventually join CRRIS when they are ready and willing to do so. The successful launch of the proposed SGC pilot CRRIS project will encourage other ethnic groups to participate and lead the province into a period of significant economic and population growth.

The CRRIS model sees a dynamic and powerful alliance formed among community ethnic groups, business and government as the optimum vehicle for effective and efficient immigration recruitment and retention. The roles of each major player can be briefly outlined as follows:

The CRRIS Model

1. Community Supported Ethnic Groups:
   Provides community support for newcomers, website advertising, targeted recruitment trips, consulting and translation services where necessary, immigrant settlement and retention services throughout the province, financial support for start-up and sustained activities, maintains master job list and foreign worker files, liases with business, government and home community.

2. Business:

Provides job information including position descriptions, salary grid, moving assistance allowances, benefits as well as representatives for recruitment trips to carry out on the spot interviews with prospective employees, participates in and supports recruitment trips financially – especially start-up.

3. Provincial Government:

Establishes and monitors flexible and efficient immigration regulatory framework, liases with Canadian and German levels of Government to reduce waiting periods and red-tape, participates in recruitment trips and provides financial support for recruitment efforts – especially start-up, supports and promotes the benefits of increased immigrants throughout the province, promotes CRRIS to the province in general.

SGC is primarily a volunteer based cultural development organization funded largely through SaskLotteries. Although short of funds the Council is long on vision and has already gained practical experience in the field of immigration recruitment. Full credit here must be given to SaskCulture, our umbrella organization, and its funding body, the Cultural Advisory Committee, which had the foresight to grant the Council $6,000 this year and last year to pursue the immigration opportunity.

For ethnic organizations like SGC the immigration opportunity is significant. Immigration promises not only a more vibrant and secure social life and a stronger economy, it also promises a much needed income stream through the establishment of a fair and effective structure for consultancy services. This idea may offend some purists or hangers-on to a worn out creed that requires cultural organizations like the Council to stand politely on the sidelines and watch others do the heavy lifting. However, this vision of cultural organizations is passé because culture builds community continuously. The Council has already assumed an innovative first mover leadership role in the immigration challenge. It has already been backed by SaskCulture, which also recognizes the revenue potential that immigration holds for its ethnic membership. The Council has formed a partnership with Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority (SREDA) and the Carlton Trail REDA (Humboldt & District) to attract immigration and investment from Germany. One of our goals is to attract young German farmers to buy out and replace ageing Saskatchewan farmers with their own young families. This project would help the rural problem of succession and help repopulate the countryside. The young farmer objective is sound because German farmland is worth 10 times Saskatchewan farmland. The Council could make young German farmer immigration work if it had the proper backing.
The facts are these: the traditional immigration consultant system is rife with corruption and consultants who routinely charge $6,000 to $8,000 for minimal services. To rely further on the status quo immigration system, propped up traditional consultants, is problematic. One look at recent Saskatchewan immigration numbers tell a clear story: the traditional sit-back-and-wait-for-immigration-to-happen system does not work for Saskatchewan. Our province has to take charge of its own immigration future or wither away. But how? It can't be done with rhetoric and slogans. Beefing up the immigration department up to 40 + like Manitoba may bring results, but the payroll would be enormous. Establishing an investment/immigration office in Munich like Alberta is even more expensive. There is another way, a better and more affordable way, a made in Saskatchewan way, the CRRIS way.

A community based volunteer organization like SGC has entirely different motives when offering consultant services to prospective client/immigrations. SGC's mandate is to develop its community, not to generate profits. In lieu of a federally imposed and monitored code of conduct for consultants, the Council will structure its consulting function in a transparent manner that serves the immigrants and the community first. Any gains from consulting will be used to support additional recruitment and immigration settlement efforts. Working with CRRIS, the Province together with business and Saskatchewan's many ethnic communities have the potential to make Saskatchewan a popular immigration destination. CRRIS can play an important role in the new provincial initiative "Your Future is Here", but first it needs a boost through creative and forward looking immigration policies.

Each of the three CRRIS partners – community, government and business – would nominate two representatives to a provincial CRRIS committee which would be responsible for the conduct of immigration attraction activities. The decisions of the committee would be administered by a secretariat located in the Saskatchewan German Council or in some other provincial ethnic community organization.

Below is a broad-brush proposed budget of Year I of CRRIS (Year II and subsequent years will be self-funded through immigration consultant fees and services*):

Two start-up recruitment trips to Germany @ $8,000 each with representatives from SaskGovernment and at least 10 Sask. companies	$16,000
Have time liaison/website manager	15,000
Promo literature in German language	3,000
Office Rental one year	5,500
TOTAL	**$39,500**

* Once the start-up trips are completed the revenue from actual immigration services and fees will finance future immigration initiatives. Thus the CRRIS model become self-sufficient in the second year. A successful Year I of SGC's trial CRRIS model will encourage other ethnic groups to become active in immigration activities and start up their own self-funding CRRIS immigration activities.

Best Regards,

Karl Bastian, President
Saskatchewan German Council

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Cc: SGC Immigration Committee